

# SECURITY

*Can we retrieve it?*

*by*

SIR ARTHUR SALTER

K.C.B., HON. D.C.L., M.P.

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“ Must a government, of necessity, be too strong  
for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to  
maintain its own existence ? ”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



## PREFACE

SEVEN years ago I wrote *Recovery: the Second Effort*. In it I advocated the policy which, after ten years of international experience, I thought would best meet the needs of the time.

An economic depression, aggravated by a financial crisis, then occupied the forefront of the world stage. Political difficulties were much less prominent than they are now, and it only needed the wholehearted support of Great Britain and France, whose combined strength was still unchallengeable in Europe, to enable the League of Nations to deal with them.

A year later, however, the advent of the Nazi régime in Germany marked what has proved to be one of the turning-points in world history. Since then political dangers have occupied the scene, and all policy needs to be viewed in a new perspective.

During these years, too, the sources of strength upon which the League of Nations depended have been first gradually, and then rapidly, drained away.

The questions we have now to put to ourselves are very different from those of seven years ago, and much more difficult.

Is war inevitable? What course of policy offers the best hope of averting it, and at the same time of preserving what is most valuable in the heritage of our civilisation? Is the League of Nations still an instrument of peace or has it become a source of peril?

Are we to find our salvation in a policy which combines both strength to resist and a discriminating willingness to concede? If so, how shall we find the necessary strength, and upon what principles shall we decide when and in what form to offer concessions?

If the League of Nations is now too shattered to afford

collective security, can we rebuild it? If so, how and upon what principles? And how can we determine under what conditions the reciprocal obligations involved will increase our danger and under what conditions they will reduce it?

These are the questions which are discussed in this book. But they are discussed, of necessity, under a limiting condition which is peculiar to this period. It is no longer possible, as it was a few years ago, to recommend a definite course of policy which, if right at the time, would be likely to remain right for an indefinite time. No such clear rule as "follow the principles of the League of Nations and apply them to current problems" is now possible as an automatic criterion of action. A course right to-day may be wrong to-morrow, for the rapid march — indeed riot — of successive and shattering events will change the whole situation in relation to which policy must be determined. A writer for the daily Press may, and Foreign Ministers must, consider for example whether or not, in the circumstances of the moment, it is possible and is desirable to attempt a combination between certain specific countries, on the basis of certain reciprocal obligations. But a writer of a book, which cannot be published within a few days, can attempt no such specific advice. For new events may quickly make a course of action which is right one moment impossible, disastrous or irrelevant — and the initiative is no longer ours. All policy, even though it be rightly conceived and directed towards the right goal, must now be — as it did not need to be till quite recently — opportunist in detail. We must judge, day by day, what is the right course to pursue, and change our judgement as events beyond our control require.

Nevertheless, we shall have at least a better chance of making these current judgements rightly if we have in our minds both a background of the past and a goal for our ultimate objective. We must try to understand what has happened and why it happened; we must have an ideal of what it is which we desire, if possible, ultimately to

obtain ; we must consider what are the conditions under which one or another alternative policy will help us to avoid disaster in the present and to move, if it be by only a step, towards our final goal ; and we must then assess realistically and coolly the conditions and circumstances of the moment.

Can we find some assistance in our daily problems from a general survey of the international scene ? A writer who attempts such a task is compelled, by the unprecedented rapidity with which the scene is changing, to paint his picture quickly and be content with imperfections which would be intolerable to leisurely scholarship. He must discuss what is likely to be of enduring significance with much that, however quickly he works, will be out of date before it is published. For, as events are now moving, political geography will soon have to be taught with a cinematograph rather than an atlas. Nevertheless, in spite of all the inevitable imperfections, and sometimes perhaps superficiality of treatment, which present conditions impose, I believe that it is worth while to make the attempt.

I have no novel proposals to put forward. The measures I advocate are those which, in common with many other people, I have been urging *seriatim* and consistently for years. How, indeed, could it be otherwise ? For no Member of Parliament would be justified in refraining from immediately putting forward any proposals which he believed to be of value. But measures thus recommended, one after the other and separately, will perhaps gain strength if they can be shown to be integral parts of a coherent policy. My object therefore has been to present a picture of the whole, however slight the treatment sometimes must be, of the general situation as I see it, and of a general policy to meet it.

I have not shrunk from criticisms both of persons and of administrative action and inaction. But I have tried to eliminate any general political prejudice in my opinions. I am a member of no party myself, and in actual fact my

personal attitude to the Ministers I criticise in this book was usually, on my first contact with them and their work, one of hopeful expectation. Only with disappointment in actual experience did I reluctantly form the opinions (when and so far as they are adverse) which are here expressed. I have, however, limited my criticism to cases in which it seemed necessary to give force to my positive proposals. It is for this reason that, while I indicate a general point of view in my account of the political history of the post-war period, I offer very little comment upon the actions of individual Ministers in foreign policy. I have, in fact, very definite and strong views about the errors and follies of recent years in this sphere of policy, and about the responsibilities of the Ministers concerned. But the expression of these opinions at any length did not seem to me to be a help toward such positive proposals as I had to make, and I have therefore refrained from it. On the other hand, it was scarcely possible to put the case for administrative reform as strongly as it should be put without dwelling, in some detail, both upon the actual deficiencies in our defensive preparations and upon the responsibilities of the different Ministers. I have therefore discussed these at some length, though I have, as will I think be recognised, taken special precautions to avoid saying anything that might be contrary to the public interest.

The book which follows is in five main Parts. The first attempts to assess the Peril and the Prospect that now confront us, and for this purpose to indicate both the material and political factors which are of chief importance. The second is a study of the evolution of the League of Nations from the point of view of the forces within it which, during the last twenty years, determined its changing character and its strength. The third deals with the question of our own National Strength, criticising certain deficiencies in our organisation and proposing reforms. The fourth advocates in outline a

constructive policy for a New Foundation of Peace. The fifth is in the nature of a summary of conclusions both as to the strength and weakness of the two rival systems, and the measures which it is urged that the democracies should take in their defence.

In writing to this plan, I should have wished to make the Fourth Part, which deals with the Foundations of a New Peace, the climax to which the rest would lead. I am conscious that it is, in fact, one of the least satisfactory Parts of the book. The reason is significant of the period in which we live, and it will be appreciated by many who, like myself, have long been trying to work out, and work for, reforms in political and economic structure and policies which would enable the peace of the world to be more firmly established. We have all of us, for some years, been forced by the imminent menace to turn our thoughts from this constructive task to the problems of the day and the need for increasing our defensive strength. If we now try to recall the larger purpose which was for so many years the centre of our thoughts and desires we become conscious that it has, for the moment, lost something of its life and growth in our minds. We realise that we need to make a new and constant effort to keep it always in our consciousness. We realise, too, how much the constructive idealism of those who are separated by the Atlantic from so imminent an anxiety can now make to what remains the world's greatest and most permanent problem. I present this part of the book, therefore, with an apology — and as an appeal to those who can add what I cannot now add myself.

The purpose of the book then is, with these limitations, to help in our daily problems by giving, in main outline, a picture of the *background* and the *goal* : that and no more.

ARTHUR SALTER

ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD  
*Easter 1939*

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I have repeated a few pages from a pamphlet of mine, *The Nettle and the Flower*, of October 1938, and from a lecture delivered in 1936, and wish therefore to express my acknowledgements also to the publishers in the two cases, the *Spectator* and the Hogarth Press.

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# CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	PAGE vii
-------------------	-------------

## PART I

### THE PERIL AND THE PROSPECT

#### CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	3
------------------------	---

#### CHAPTER II

THE PASSING OF ISLAND IMMUNITY . . . . .	9
--	---

#### CHAPTER III

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DEFEAT . . . . .	15
------------------------------------	----

#### CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICS OF GEOGRAPHICAL ISOLATION . . . . .	26
--	----

#### CHAPTER V

THE ECONOMICS OF DICTATORSHIPS . . . . .	48
--	----

#### CHAPTER VI

STRATEGY AND STRENGTH . . . . .	65
---------------------------------	----

#### CHAPTER VII

THE NEW GROUPING OF POWERS . . . . .	85
--------------------------------------	----

<i>Note to Part I</i> . . . . .	95
---------------------------------	----

## PART II

### COLLECTIVE SECURITY

#### CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS . . . . .	99
---	----

#### CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL IDEAS OF 1919 . . . . .	110
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER III		PAGE
THE TASKS OF THE LEAGUE . . . . .		126
CHAPTER IV		
CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS . . . . .		135
CHAPTER V		
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF TWO DECADES . . . . .		145
CHAPTER VI		
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE LEAGUE . . . . .		154
CHAPTER VII		
THE PATH BACK TO COLLECTIVE SECURITY . . . . .		163
PART III		
NATIONAL STRENGTH		
CHAPTER I		
THE STRATEGY OF BRITISH REARMAMENT . . . . .		175
CHAPTER II		
THE POSITION IN SEPTEMBER 1938 . . . . .		186
CHAPTER III		
THE PERSONAL EQUATION . . . . .		193
CHAPTER IV		
GENERAL STAFFS — MILITARY AND ECONOMIC . . . . .		216
CHAPTER V		
INDUSTRIAL MOBILISATION . . . . .		221
CHAPTER VI		
ECONOMIC ADAPTATION AND THE PUBLIC . . . . .		231
CHAPTER VII		
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS . . . . .		245

## CHAPTER VIII

NATIONAL UNITY AND NATIONAL SERVICE . . .	PAGE ● 258
---	---------------

## CHAPTER IX

THE PRIME MINISTER . . . . .	282
<i>Note to Part III</i> . . . . .	302

## PART IV

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF A NEW PEACE

## CHAPTER I

PEACE AIMS AND WAR AIMS . . . . .	307
-----------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER II

THE BASIS OF A GENERAL SETTLEMENT . . . . .	315
---	-----

## CHAPTER III

A DRAFT MANIFESTO OF BRITISH POLICY . . . . .	345
---	-----

## PART V

## FREEDOM AND THE SWASTIKA

## CHAPTER I

THE STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF TWO SYSTEMS . . . . .	369
--	-----

## CHAPTER II

THE DEFENCE OF DEMOCRACIES : SUMMARY . . . . .	380
--	-----

<i>Epilogue</i> . . . . .	385
---------------------------	-----

NOTE . . . . .	387
----------------	-----

INDEX . . . . .	389
-----------------	-----



PART I

THE PERIL AND THE PROSPECT



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

THE danger of war now dominates every political issue. All efforts to promote economic or social progress are dependent upon peace, and even while our present precarious peace remains they must largely be frustrated by increased armaments expenditure and by the diversion of all public attention to foreign policy.

Every other problem is therefore now subordinate in importance and urgency to that of finding a policy appropriate to the present international situation.

The British people are at once anxious and bewildered. They profoundly desire peace. They desire no less, however, to preserve the heritage of our free institutions from the dangers alike of alien domination and of domestic autocracy. They are becoming conscious that no armed force can promise the same safety, even at home, as was given by the British Navy in the last century, since an air fleet can retaliate, but cannot completely protect, against attack from the air. They feel that the British Empire, dispersed, coveted and vulnerable, represents at once interests which they are unwilling to surrender and responsibilities which they cannot honourably abandon. They watch with profound anxiety the growth in power and arrogance of the great dictatorships and their encouragement of ambitions, of passions and of policies, which threaten to confront the rest of the world with the alternatives of subjection without visible limit or of war upon the greatest scale. They have been painfully conscious (too late at first and more recently perhaps to excess) of the extent to which their own and other countries victorious in the last war are responsible for

the growth of these new forces and passions. While, however, an uneasy conscience has helped to paralyse their action in the new situation confronting them, they have no confidence that a policy of generous concessions, which might in the past have averted the danger, will now by itself suffice to end it. They fear indeed that concessions now made under menace may rather whet than sate the appetite, while at the same time refusal to concede may lead to a war which no available strength, national or collective, can now be relied upon to prevent or even certainly to bring to a victorious issue. They are aware that similar anxieties extend throughout the threatened countries of Europe. They see again repeated, on a larger scale and in a more tragic mood, the phenomena which preceded the last war, the race in armaments, the search for alliances, the grouping into two opposed camps, the military conversations between staffs — all the classic precursors of catastrophe. The trend of events is beyond question towards war ; and unless policy can control and reverse this trend, war must come.

What should be the basis of such a policy ? The British people are as bewildered as they are anxious. After the war they placed their hopes and their faith in the League of Nations as embodying the principle of international law and order. This was the declared basis of policy of successive British Cabinets, as of the Governments of most other countries. But, as operated by these Governments, the League system, except in a few instances not of the first importance, did not succeed either in securing necessary changes in the *status quo* by a genuine process of peaceful negotiation or in preventing changes by force or the menace of force, as in Austria and Czechoslovakia, or in averting war between League members in the Far East, in South America and in Africa. The public have been confused in their judgement as to whether these failures have been due to defects in the League's structure and methods, or to weakness,



insincerity and unwisdom in the Governments of States and Members of the League. In any case, even if the blame rests with the Governments, the public are beginning to realise, though many are reluctant to admit, that the balance of power has now so changed between countries which are still members of the League and those which are hostile to it, that the collective system of defence cannot now function in the way in which it was intended to, and as it could have done a few years ago. At the best, it will give a less certain assurance of peace than the League at one time seemed to promise. If it can be rebuilt at all, it must at least for the time assume the form of a defensive alliance against the aggression of predictable assailants rather than a genuine collective system comprising under the same reciprocal engagements potential friends and foes alike.

In such a situation many resign themselves to a kind of fatalism. The passions aroused, the apparently inescapable dependence of powerful régimes upon policies that must mean war, the mere momentum of mechanical preparations, seem to them to have set in motion forces too powerful for human control. "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." They turn therefore in despair to courses of policy which, even in the minds of those who urge them, promise no more than a possibility of respite, in which "something may happen" — an internal revolution, an assassination, a localised catastrophe — which may leave us immune and lead to a new opportunity. They hope blindly that some fresh events, as much beyond their comprehension, prevision or direction as those which have led to the present situation, may somehow in time bring a better one. Rearmament with no counterpart in constructive policy is an expression of this mood.

While some, however, in spite of every disillusionment have clung throughout to the belief that the League system can be made to function again, though rather as a form

of alliance against the Axis dictatorships than as a true system of collective security ; and while others have turned in despair to the extremes of armed isolation or alliances of the pre-war type ; still others during the last two years have hoped that a third alternative, a policy of " appeasement " would serve. Mr. Chamberlain as Prime Minister was until March 1939 the protagonist and embodiment of this policy. He persevered in his efforts and in his faith, in spite of successive disappointments, the bitter antagonism of his opponents, and the recurrent revolt of sections of his own supporters. He pushed his policy forward through personal contacts, was prepared to pass a sponge over past grievances, and made it evident to the discontented countries that they could achieve changes in the *status quo* without resort to war. But if there was in his mind a broad and comprehensive plan for a new general settlement, based upon clear principles to distinguish between what could be conceded and what must be resisted, no such plan was ever announced. In practice the policy seemed, to potential friends and foes alike, no more than a readiness to yield under menace to the demands which were successively made, with an ultimate intention to resist only where British interests or French territory were directly assailed. The success of the policy rested more and more upon hope in the moderation and good faith of the dictators. On the Ides of March of 1939 that hope perished.

Since then, the British Government, still with Mr. Chamberlain at its head, but now both disillusioned and indignant, has resumed the abandoned policy of seeking to establish a collective defence, based upon a common interest in resistance to aggression. It resumes this policy at a time when the power of the Axis States is reaching its maximum, when Czechoslovakia has been lost and Spain is, with their aid, in the hands of General Franco. It is late ; but perhaps not yet too late. For if fear has driven potential allies into the German orbit, fear and new hope

combined may draw them out from it. Poland, long hovering between France and Germany, swinging towards the latter in a greater dislike of Communism than of Nazism, preferring in the autumn of last year to share in the spoils of her neighbour's destruction rather than to defend her integrity, hoping ever for neutrality but now despairing of it, has turned again towards the Western democracies. Rumania and Greece wonder how far they may dare the same course. The other lesser States of Europe hesitate between fears and hopes. The great Republic of the West watches with increasing indignation Fascist aggression and persecution in Europe and with increasing sympathy those who are attempting to avert a catastrophe ; and meditates whether, and how far, to translate sympathy into active policy. And in the Fascist countries the desire for peace among the people is strong, is perhaps increasing, and is already better known than formerly to themselves, to their rulers, and to the outside world.

Nevertheless the power of the Axis dictators is formidable ; their strategic position is in some, though not all, respects very favourable ; their strength is mobilised and for a short war fully prepared ; their ambitions intemperate and their methods, confirmed by success, hardly compatible with a tolerable peace. The richer potential resources of the democracies, both in material and in human sympathies and aspirations, have not yet been translated into an equivalent strength in arms. Can any policy in these conditions now avert a destructive war ?

No confident answer can be given to this question. It may be that, whatever policy we pursue, war will come, and that while the outbreak of war at any time would probably have involved us sooner or later, the new British policy of defensive pacts will mean that we shall be involved sooner rather than later.

How then can we develop this policy so that it may have its best chance of success ? Can we strengthen it by

including in it what many had hoped, but hoped in vain, would be a definite and proclaimed part of the policy of appeasement — the broadening of our peace aims (and, if need be, our war aims) into the plan of a new general settlement of the world's principal grievances? Can we boldly plan and clearly proclaim a new peace settlement which shall lay a surer and juster foundation of peace than the Treaty of Versailles? Can we in this way find at once an additional attraction for our possible friends, a national unity which will enable us to mobilise our own strength, a way to weaken the will to aggression in the peoples of the dictatorship countries, and for all of us an inspiration and an adequate goal for our efforts?

The events of the last year, from the rape of Austria in the spring of 1938 to the seizures of Bohemia and Moravia and of Albania in the spring of 1939, have both deepened our anxieties and stimulated our imagination and will. May it be, however, that these experiences, which reveal to all of us our grave dangers, have discovered also new possibilities of a constructive peace policy?

These are the questions which it is the purpose of this book to discuss.

In the chapters which now follow we shall consider the political ideas and motives which may determine the part to be played in the great drama now being enacted by Great Britain, Germany and the U.S.A. We shall then consider more broadly the new grouping of Powers, and the strategic and political factors involved, in the world of Easter 1939.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PASSING OF ISLAND IMMUNITY

THE mentality of an island people is stubborn and not easily changed ; and it may well outlast the causes in which it originated. For nearly 900 years Great Britain has been exempt from destruction of life and property, except on a minute scale, by any hostile force from overseas. There is no region of the Continent which has enjoyed any comparable good fortune. And for a hundred years after Trafalgar we had more than this. An unchallengeable Navy was not only a sure shield against invasion ; it enabled us to exercise a potent influence, without risk of resistance or reprisal, over all the seven seas and upon every land washed by them or dependent on overseas trade. It was a silent and invisible power, rendered tolerable and indeed, we may not unjustly claim, beneficent to the world by the liberality and magnanimity of the political ideas of the country which wielded it. We policed the seas ; we demanded no preferential tariffs, asking no more than that we should be treated as well as others ; we opened our own home market without tariffs ; we allowed foreign goods to enter our dependent colonies on the same conditions as our own, and our colonial raw materials were available equally, without differentiation, to all who wanted them.

Freedom and safety on all the seas ; just government, extending gradually to free and representative government, in the vast British Empire ; a potent influence in favour of similar forms of government in every country accessible by sea ; these constituted a strong framework of an international order, sustained by the British people and their sea-power. Behind this shelter there grew up a

stable interrelation of currencies, a vast system of international trade, and economic policies which tended ever to enlarge the area of commercial interchanges and the reciprocal benefits of every form of international contact. It was a power at once so great, so unchallenged and so invisible that its benefits were taken for granted, like the gifts of Nature. The vast American experiment, for example, of assimilating a heterogeneous population of every race without disruptive dissension ; of federalising the jealously independent States of a continent ; of harvesting the fruits of an unprecedented industrial development and increase of numbers, was perhaps only possible because all this internal progress took place behind the shelter of an international order constructed and sustained by others.

But however beneficent and politically magnanimous was this authority over the marine half of the world, the rule, the peace, the benefits were the fruits of what was after all the dominant sea-power of a small island comprising only 2 per cent of the world's population. The power, even if not abused, was potentially capable of abuse ; in any case, it brought rewards which were enviable and envied ; and benefits withdrawable at the will of one country, even though not withdrawn, are resented by others who prefer rights to favours and therefore seek an equality of power. It was therefore inevitable that as one country after another developed an industrial power equal to our own, and sometimes a control over inland industrial resources in excess of anything to which we could aspire, a challenge to our sea supremacy would come. It appeared first from Germany, and the instant response, in British policy and popular feeling, to the German naval programme at the beginning of this century, showed how deep and strong was our sense of what was meant by insular invulnerability and naval power over the sea and coasts of the world. The challenge was accepted, and in the war successfully defeated. Sea supremacy, however, could not in any event endure indefinitely, and the accept-

ance of parity with the U.S.A. marked the end of it in its old sense. But the invulnerability of Britain might long have continued if the sea had remained the only road of access to a sea-surrounded land. It is not naval parity with the U.S.A., or the growth of the navies of other countries, but the submarine, the long-distance gun, and above all the aeroplane which have destroyed the ancient basis of our island immunity.

### *The Psychology of Island Immunity*

An environment which remains static for so long develops instinctive beliefs and attitudes, of which men are normally unconscious, but which are all-powerful, especially at times of emotional stress, in determining the response to a particular emergency. Instinct has a subtlety, rapidity and precision which plodding reason cannot rival, and is often a better guide to action than a superficial ratiocination — so long as the environment in which it develops is unchanged. But if there is a fundamental change, instinct will betray us. There is nothing for it then but reason ; and reason working under all the handicaps of instinctive opposition.

We are now in such a period. New weapons of warfare have destroyed our island immunity. The strategic consequences are immediate, but the instinctive responses formed by, and adapted to, the old environment change more slowly.

What, then, were the principal characteristics of the instinctive attitude of public opinion towards foreign affairs which resulted from island immunity ?

The great advantage of our position was that we could intervene in continental affairs, as no country of the Continent could, without risk of serious reprisals. The principle of " limited liability ", which was throughout the world so great an encouragement to industrial and commercial enterprise during the period of greatest economic expan-

sion, was physically incapable of application to foreign policy — except for a country invulnerable at its heart. We alone, upon this side of the Atlantic, enjoyed that privilege. We could, if we would, send our armies and limit our risks to the cost in life and treasure which they directly represented. We could send our fleet, exert its power and withdraw it when we would. And with such safe limits upon our liability we could give a free development, and often a potent expression, to the liberal and humane sympathies and political ideas which accompanied the increasing prosperity of the nineteenth century. We could thunder reprobation at atrocities in Eastern Europe ; we could offer the encouraging spectacle of British warships when a Garibaldi shipped his liberating forces from Sicily to Italy. And the effect of our words, voicing often a world opinion which others could not express with equal effect, or at least without a discouraging risk, was reinforced by latent economic benefits or injuries, and the limited, but within its limits potent, might of sea-power. It was a rôle in foreign politics which was often intensely irritating to countries stronger in every arm except upon the sea, and sometimes a trap for those we desired to assist by encouraging them to rely upon help which, if it could reach a sea-coast, could not penetrate beyond. In any case, even if it irritated some and occasionally harmed others, it was without risk to ourselves. And, on the whole, we used the opportunities of our immunity to help the causes of national independence, free and representative institutions and humane government ; a fruitful function (in spite of the limits to our power) which only we could perform. For no continental country, even with the ideas, enjoyed the “ limited liability ” which made it possible ; and in the nineteenth century the U.S.A. was too remote, too weak, and without adequate sea-power or influence. That function in international affairs has now passed from us, with the invulnerability on which it depended, across the Atlantic



—and very nobly has the President of the U.S.A. been playing that part in recent months.

In any case, no one can properly understand the reasons which made possible the Palmerstonian or Gladstonian interventions in Europe, or the growth of the distinctively British (and more recently rather similar American) missionary attitude towards foreign policy, or the difference in the mentality of continental countries and their opinion of British policy and ideas, unless he relates them all to the basic fact of our island immunity and the limited liability which went with it.

No country whose capital could be reached by any sufficiently strong hostile army could embark upon any policy, or even express its opinion of the conduct of others in complete freedom, without close regard to relative military strength. It could not dare to embark lightly upon an intervention and then withdraw ; it could not encourage or help and then abandon ; it could not even speak unless it was prepared to act and to face consequences to which no sea barrier set a limit. The policy of such countries therefore, in comparison with ours, was necessarily more consistent, less idealistic, more directly related to the national military strength and defence system — in a sense more responsible. Hence on the one hand the irritated accusations against *perfid*e Albion of hypocrisy and Machiavellian subtlety ; hence, on the other hand, the continuing belief of small and oppressed countries in the greater altruism and idealism of British policy.

All the instinctive responses of the British people are due to our traditions, habits and experience in the long period of our immunity. The immunity exists no more. Even before the advent of the aeroplane, the Navy could not protect us in face of the submarine and the long-distance gun unless the Low Countries as well as France were friendly and secure from hostile domination. And an immunity, already so qualified, has now been destroyed. To the aeroplane the

North Sea is indistinguishable from half an hour of land ; only land defences and air-power in which we have no superiority, and not sea-power, can now defend London; the inviolate and inviolable capital has become of all the most vulnerable. True, the Navy can still protect us from a hostile army of occupation, at least until troops can be transported in sufficient numbers by air or unless the will and power of the country is otherwise broken, but it is no shield against aerial bombardment, the consequences of which no one can with certainty foretell. We shall see later to what extent the instinctive responses of the island nation may be a dangerous guide to action in the new strategic conditions.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DEFEAT

A POLICY which aims not merely at matching force with force, but at weakening the will to aggression of possible opponents, must depend for its success upon the psychology of those to whom it is addressed. If, then, in combination with a strength and determination to resist the intolerable, we are prepared to offer in a suitable form concessions which are in themselves reasonable, will these tend to sate the appetite or to whet it ?

To have the best chance of guessing the answer — which we cannot in any case foretell with certainty — we must consider not only ordinary human psychology, or even the special psychology of the Germans as a race. We need also to understand the psychology of the German people under the special influences of the events of the last twenty-five years.

I say the German people rather than the German Government, because if the latter only were in question few of us would be optimistic about the answer. But there are limits to the effects of propaganda and repression, and if the German people turned increasingly to a preference for a reasonable settlement by agreement rather than limitless aggrandisement with all the hazards of war, the policy of the country would be likely to be modified whether under the present rulers or others who might replace them.

Dictatorships as well as democracies need to carry their public with them, and they devote as much of their efforts to doing so, though their methods are very different. No ruler can ignore the element of weakness in a long war which would result from the reluctance and resentment of a nation brought into such a catastrophe by a policy which it disliked.

The psychology which we have to consider is that of a

great people which has suffered the humiliation of defeat, and, then, under the impetus given by indignation and wounded pride, has put an end to its military inferiority while still suffering some of the consequences of its inferiority in the past.

This is a psychology which we find very difficult to understand, for we have never till quite recently had the experience from which it springs. From Waterloo for more than a century, till after the victory of 1918, we had lost battles, but never a war ; had never suffered more than momentary defeats quickly redressed ; had never even experienced a deeply humiliating failure in diplomacy. We do not easily perceive the symptoms of the deep wounds in a national consciousness which such experience may cause. We may fail to recognise them in others ; we may fail to recognise them in ourselves.

But the history of the last decade in fact results, in very large measure indeed, from the psychological reactions of a nation to defeat. For a time after 1918 Germany was not only beaten in war but subdued in spirit to a mood in which a generous and magnanimous policy of reconciliation might well have been successful. The best German elements indeed, though not all, welcomed a Wilsonian peace as a fresh start. But as time passed, with little sign of a magnanimous policy from the Allies, a deep resentment grew throughout the country. For those who remembered and represented the pride of the Second Reich, the army officers and the officials, the sense of humiliation and defeat was like a festering wound. They could not accept defeat as final. They could not even accept it as a fact. The legend of treachery, of conspiracy behind the Front, of Marxist and Jewish plots, grew until the plain truth of the situation, that Germany had been defeated by a combination superior in its total military and economic strength, was excluded from the conscious mind ; there followed the search for scapegoats, Communist or non-Aryan. The humiliation of defeat by force, even though it

was the force of half the world, was intolerable, and was only made tolerable by a protective form of self-delusion.

But the humiliation, though thus masked, remained ; the wound, though no longer gaping wide, festered in the mind. It was a principal cause of all that happened in the years before and after 1933.

It is difficult for those who have not had the experience, or have had it so recently that its effects are still subconscious, to realise how deep and rankling are the wounds of national humiliation. I recall a memory of the last war. I had become intimate with an Italian Cabinet Minister. One evening I was dining quietly with him at a time when the tide seemed turning in our favour ; we were in a cheerful mood and I said lightly, " It will do them good to know defeat." At once his mood changed and, with an intensity of feeling which I have never forgotten, he said, " You don't know what you're saying. You belong to a nation which has no memories of defeat and humiliation ; I belong to one which, till within living memory, had long been under foreign domination. You cannot conceive what injury that does to the soul of a nation. I tell you that I, a member of my Government, still do not feel in my heart, when I meet members of yours, that I am speaking as an equal among equals."

It is one of the deepest and most universal instincts of human nature to feel that a wound to self-respect can only be cured by a violent assertion of virility, and usually by successful revenge. Hence the custom of the vendetta, with its alternating murders throughout generations, or the milder and less self-perpetuating practice of the duel. Strong national government has slowly and imperfectly brought these expressions of the individual instinct within control. But for the relation of nations themselves there is no comparable restraint ; and the reactions of a nation to a wound to self-respect are similar to those of an individual in an anarchic community, except that they are more dangerous and more enduring. In German psychology the

instinctive reaction against anything felt as such a wound is particularly strong, possibly because Germany is so much nearer the feudal stage of her history and has so much more recently become a great and imperial nation. In any case, the emphasis of this element in the conception of "honour" is greater than in most other countries.

This is beyond question one of the forces that make for successive wars between great States with alternating fortunes. Where revenge adequate to wipe out the injury is unobtainable, the memory of humiliation and the hatred it engenders seem almost immortal, and the result is a curiously timeless perspective in the national history. I remember some years ago travelling for several days round the frontiers of a small Balkan State with a national official. He was, in all his personal relations and instincts, a kindly and humane person. But each evening something seemed to well up from a racial rather than a personal subconsciousness. He would suddenly exclaim, "Those accursed—" (mentioning a neighbouring people); "they stop all our trade, and they gouge out the eyes of the prisoners taken from us". "Wait a moment," I would say; "when you speak of stopping your trade I suppose you mean last month's new tariff, but when was it they gouged out the eyes of prisoners?" "In 13—," he replied. He knew his facts and his dates, but yesterday or six centuries ago was just the same. We could find a similar instance of such a timeless memory — of history without chronology — without going as far as South-Eastern Europe, in a small country adjacent to ourselves which has never felt that it has wiped out its injuries by an adequate revenge. In such a perspective a thousand years are as a day; but it is scarcely a divine attribute.

Powerful States, however, rather than endure a wound for ever rankling, usually prefer the blood purge of revenge. To an exceptional extent the English are inclined to forget grievances and to seek to make friends of a former foe. It is partly a matter of national tempera-

ment ; but it is mainly because, for so many centuries, we escaped any deep wound to our national pride. • It is an experience which may well blind us to the psychology of peoples with a different experience.

The psychology of Germany does not, however, originate only in the experiences and memories of the last war. No less important is the fact that she developed full nationhood, as did Italy, late in the history of Europe. All through the last century, in the resistance to Napoleon, in all the life-work of Bismarck, even in the political storms of the next thirty years as they are reflected in the memoirs of Bülow, we are conscious always of an anxious, sometimes almost morbid, craving to attain the national unity which had been reached so long before by Great Britain and France. The impact of the war and the Versailles Treaty on German psychology was the greater because of this background.

### *The Combination of Political Resentment and Economic Distress*

Political emotions were not of course the only cause of what has happened in Germany. Economic distress, the loss of their careers by many who knew how to organise, and found their material in the disbanded and embittered army, and in the end the mass unemployment that attended the world economic depression and crisis of 1929 to 1931, were also required before the forces of discontent rose to the point of revolution. It is idle to attempt to assess the relative importance of the political and the economic factors. Neither would have sufficed without the other. During the five years of comparative prosperity that followed the Dawes settlement and loans, the sense of humiliation was scarcely visible among the political troubles of the Weimar Republic ; it was certainly no menace to the régime ; for most Germans it was probably below the level of consciousness. It was only in the distress of the following years that, with

skilful fanning, it was rekindled. Nor was it only general distress that counted among the economic forces. The inflation of 1923 went far towards destroying the middle classes who, in Germany as elsewhere, have been the main source and the main support of the political ideas which underlie the representative democracies on both sides of the Atlantic. This destruction has been carried further, under the Nazi régime, and to understand the forces behind that régime we must always bear in mind the difference which results from the absence of the distinctive middle class outlook in general public opinion. The working classes tend to care more for a strong position in relation to their employers in the factories than for personal rights in relation to the State, while at the same time they are less inclined to be chauvinistic than a middle class is often apt to be. For both good and ill, in favouring a real desire for peace and also a not unwilling acceptance of subordination to the State, the elimination of distinctively middle-class influence is among the factors of which the Nazi régime has to take account. It adds to their strength ; but it may also, under certain conditions, be a political restraint upon their ability to follow an illimitably aggressive policy and to wage a war in its pursuit. This is one of the most important aspects of the economic dislocation which was superimposed upon political grievances in Germany in the period which followed the war.

The effect of the convergence of national humiliation and industrial distress was incomparably greater than either could have produced alone, and it has since shaken the world. It is a delusion that two and two always make four. Combine two chemical substances, each of which may have only a small explosive force, or none, and the result may be either a harmless amalgam or an explosive force a thousand times greater than the combined strength of each of them. So it is with political forces. In any case the festering wound of national humiliation was an indispensable element in the German psychology which



gave the new Nazi Party their opportunity and enabled the country to re-establish its armed strength at the cost of great sacrifice and danger. The process had indeed begun earlier through an industrial organisation that was adaptable both to economic purposes and the preparation of rearmament. But it was only after the advent of the new régime that the manufacture of arms began upon a great scale, in open breach of the treaties, and it was only the division and supineness of the former Allies which made it possible without either interference or counter-preparations. For victory following upon the experiences of war produced in the Allies a temper precisely the opposite of that which the memories and consequences of defeat had brought in Germany. And Germany had her opportunity not only to catch up, but to outstrip.

With the increase in strength the German mood changed. But it changed to something very different indeed from that of a country which has long been strong and exempt from humiliation. There has resulted the most dangerous of all states of national psychology, that which develops at a time of transition from inferiority to equal or superior strength. Germany, Japan and Italy have all been recently through periods in which they were treated as inferior by those with whom they felt they should be equals, and in which, while bitterly resenting this treatment, they had to endure it because of their weakness. Under the impulse of this resentment, in combination with other powerful causes, they have since acquired a power which makes them more feared than they fear others. The psychological state which attends this process is inaccurately described as either an inferiority or a superiority complex. It is much more dangerous than either. It combines the worst of both. It is different from that of a country which is conscious both of unequal treatment and of comparative weakness. It is equally different from the complacent sense of superiority which, for example, made England disliked

but tolerated when, in her most fortunate period, she felt secure enough to allow her Navy to police the seas invisibly without imposing differential trade conditions. The psychology of the transition state, as power is regained and while the memories of humiliation are still vivid, combines the resentment of weakness with the arrogance of strength. Success may intoxicate like wine, but a potion composed of memories of humiliation and a new consciousness of power may madden like a noxious drug.

We may perhaps find in the psychological forces which have been here discussed some explanation of one of the most terrible of recent phenomena, the increase in more than one part of the world of sheer cruelty. It is more than a return to the callous indifference to suffering which had been yielding to the humanitarianism of the nineteenth century. The cruelty we are now witnessing is, in part at least, sadistic. Perhaps all of us have among the worst potentialities of our nature the capacity to feel pleasure in inflicting pain. But for most people, at most times, this is hidden beneath deep layers of more kindly instincts, and humane traditions and conventions. When nothing has occurred to disturb their normal way of life the Germans, perhaps even more than most others, present the aspect of kindly, domestic people. It would seem that a wound to what is felt to be the inner virility of a man, or a nation, may penetrate, and for the time destroy, this protective crust of civilised behaviour and feeling ; and that an intense and violent re-assertion of virility has the effect of uncovering passions of which civilised man is normally unconscious. The resulting national temper is reflected, exaggerated and stimulated by a dictatorial régime.

These then are the psychological forces which the Nazi Government has been able to exploit, and from which it has drawn its strength. And it has done so with the greater success because it has been able to use the new technique of the totalitarian party dictatorship, the most terrible and sinister discovery in the art of government of our age.

This account of the psychology of Germany would, however, be incomplete if it stopped at this point. •The Nazi régime has been exploiting and exciting the emotions just described, and attempting for six years, by every method of propaganda and enforcement, to impose its own aggressive and militant will upon the nation. It is equally important that the process has been in operation for as long as six years, and that it has not been in operation longer. The time will come, if the régime lasts, when those who constitute the public of Germany will have been conditioned by Nazi methods of propaganda and suggestion from childhood. No one can tell how fundamentally the human mind may be changed by such a process begun in, and continued throughout, the formative period, and how far the reactions which are otherwise normal will have been eliminated and changed. But all the present adults of Germany had their formative period before the Nazi régime began, and a substantial proportion before the last war.

How do such minds react to the effects of Nazi conditioning continued for six years? Do they increasingly succumb to the influence or is there a reaction towards something of their earlier ideals and outlook? It is at about this date that the question might be expected to find an answer. In the first experience of triumph after humiliation it was inevitable that there should be arrogance embittered by remembered grievances. But as the years continue and the successes accumulate, does this temper develop further or tend to diminish? It is on the answer to this that the future depends. In the rulers there is no doubt that the appetite grows with what it feeds on, but with them other elements are involved,—the corrupting influence of excessive power and the sense that their authority can only be retained by continually developing the methods, and exploiting the feelings, by which it was acquired. In the case of the nation as a whole, however, the answer is more doubtful. The signs are not wholly

discouraging. Each new triumph evokes some natural elation, and wins new prestige for the régime, but it seems curiously short-lived in relation to the cause, and to be less and less lasting upon each successive occasion. It is on the whole surprising that, with so many successes, there should be so little of the kind of passion for *la gloire* that kept the French faithful for so long to Napoleon. As when a patient is stimulated by drugs, stronger and more frequent doses seem necessary to secure the result. This is in part the explanation of the greater frequency and severity of the external crises, each one of which usually succeeds an internal political strain which it seems designed to relieve. The immediate danger may be the greater for this reason, but if that can be averted, the light thrown upon the psychology of the people is encouraging. It is indeed remarkable that there should be so much evidence as there is of a deep and widespread desire for peace among the German people generally. How far that will penetrate and influence the armed forces, and through them even the rulers, is more doubtful. But for the Nazi rulers it is not a promising national sentiment with which to start a long conflict. And it is one which all declarations of our own policy, in peace or in war, should bear in mind.

This, then, is the path of experience, bitter, triumphant, and then in part disillusioned, along which the German people have been moving during these last two decades. It is a type of experience hitherto unknown to ourselves. But we also have now taken the first steps along it. Never for over a century has Great Britain sustained such a series of humiliations as in the last four years.

The symptoms of the usual human reactions to such experience are already in evidence in our own behaviour. We tried to persuade others, each other and ourselves—and often in the last case with considerable success—that we had agreed to the Munich settlement because it was just. There was, of course, an element of truth, as there

usually is in such beliefs ; but it was one element only and not the main one. The principal determining cause of our action was that the force against us was so formidable.

That is the plain fact which many minds found too painful to accept, and our instinctive reaction was to disguise it from ourselves by exaggerating the less humiliating factors in the situation.

Our next, and more healthy, reaction was to increase the national effort to repair the weakness which, in our hearts, we knew to be the main cause of our humiliation as it is of our own future danger. Our forces are increasing ; we are conscious of the fact, and because it is pleasanter to contemplate, our attention is directed rather to the absolute than to the relative change in our armed strength. With increased armaments the temper of the nation is changing. After so long a period in which weakness in the national will to resist, and a form of self-illusioning pacifist sentiment, have brought us into a position of grave peril, it may seem astonishing to sound a warning against an opposite danger. But after such an experience as we have recently had, new to us though familiar to many elsewhere, the public mood is quickly and violently changeable ; feeling is more likely to cloud reason than be controlled by it.

We may in such a mood be led to miscalculate and accept a challenge under impracticable conditions. We may be tempted in our policy and its expression into a form of nationalism which will harden the will of an opponent and repel the sympathy of friends. We may fail to seize the opportunity, should it occur, of averting war by an agreed settlement. We may, if war comes, fight for unworthy peace terms and, if we win, impose once more a settlement which will pave the way for further conflicts. Against all these dangers, as we nurse our indignation and gather our strength, we shall do well to be constantly on our guard.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE POLITICS OF GEOGRAPHICAL ISOLATION

#### *The American Psychology*

THE fate of the world may depend in the next few months and years upon the policy of the United States of America ; and this in turn may be determined by the instinctive and traditional attitude of the American people towards Europe.

In analysing the American psychology we find, as in the case of the British, the enduring influence of instincts and traditions derived from an environment which has changed and a slowness in their adaptation to the impact of new events. There is, however, the important difference that the chief factor in the political environment, that of the immunity given by oversea separation from any probable aggressor by the sea, for the time remains.

This, however, is only one of the strands in the complex pattern of American psychology. The main source of the instinctive reactions of the American people is still to be found in the memories of the conditions under which the American State was founded. The colonists, of British and European race, broke away from what they considered the tyranny of an autocratic monarch, based upon an aristocratic society. In doing so, they separated themselves not only from Great Britain but from the autocracies and aristocracies, the military ambitions and conflicts, of the rival States of Europe. Their mission in the world was to construct a new union of States of free men, based upon equality of human rights, combining the autonomy of separate States with that unity upon the essentials of defence and economic structure which only federation

can give, and to weld together within such a nation the races which elsewhere seem to be fated to unending fratricidal conflict. Their mission was only for the moment confined to the thirteen States in the East; it spread rapidly across the Continent, and it included in its aspirations, not indeed the exercise of political sovereignty, but the extension of a protective rôle against the threats of European aggression over the rest of the Americas down to Cape Horn. These ideals are crystallised in Washington's warning against "entangling alliances", and in the Monroe Doctrine, which, while differently interpreted at different times, remain among the formative influences of American thought.

There was one other factor in America's experience which is of equal importance. The colonists were, at the time of the secession, a small body of determined men, living in a comparatively primitive society of agriculturists and pioneers, with their task of founding a new State upon new principles still ahead of them. The country they left, with all their ancestral memories and traditions, was an ancient State, powerful and industrially developed, with a highly advanced civilisation based upon aristocracy and wealth. It was intimately associated, both in its sympathies and its antipathies, with the Continent, which to the colonists, as to those they had left, was the Mother of Civilisation. Great Britain and Europe, moreover, had both developed a diplomacy and a technique of government which, to the colonists of the New World, seemed too subtle for them to emulate, and too dangerous to all the ideals for which they fought for them not to fear and resent.

The sentiments associated with this experience have had an enduring influence which has survived the growth of the United States from one of the poorest to the richest of human communities, from the weakest to the most powerful. The American public has continued to this day to entertain a belief, not only in the greater wickedness but

also in the Machiavellian skill and far-sighted vision of British and European diplomacy, which seems proof against all evidence to the contrary. This has gone so far as sometimes to sustain a myth that when any American Government takes a hand in world affairs, the impelling motive is not the American interest at stake but the hidden hand of British and French diplomacy. How commonly do those of us who visit the U.S.A. come back feeling that we have had altogether excessive compliments paid to our intelligence at the expense of equally undeserved suspicions of our motives, an experience which, such is human vanity, we possibly enjoy rather than resent.

It is under the influence of such memories and instinctive reactions that America judges her own history and forecasts its future. It is a history which has turned above all upon her exceptional immunity from the impact of external events.

### *Isolationism ?*

(a) *First Period.*—The psychology which has just been described underlies the long conflict which has raged between isolationists and anti-isolationists ever since the Senate refused to ratify the Treaties and the Covenant in 1920. In following the course of this conflict we must distinguish clearly between two periods, though it is not possible to assign a precise date as the dividing point. Until a few years ago the discussion proceeded on both sides upon the tacit assumption, which is indeed a correct one so long as the continuance of the two principal European democracies as Great Powers can be regarded as assured, that America is herself exempt from actual invasion or from any such domination by another country as would prevent her from preserving her essential rights and interests. Both sides, however, recognised that if there should be war in Europe, she might become involved, and would in any case be bound to sustain some injury to her economic interests.



The isolationists argued during this period that America should keep clear of "quarrelling Europe", profiting from her geographical immunity, and should devote her effort to so adjusting her policy as to remove the risks of being involved in a European war, if it came, and to minimise the injurious effects of such a war upon her economic interests. The anti-isolationists, on the other hand, usually argued that the world had become so interdependent that American entanglement would be inevitable and that, in any event, the effect upon America's economy would be disastrous ; and that it was therefore better to take an active part in world politics so as to use the full influence of the country in favour of maintaining peace.

These were the counter arguments that were, or could justly be, put forward during the period we are now discussing. The fortunes of the two sides varied, but on the whole there was until recently a tendency for isolationism to gather strength, and to do so increasingly as the European situation began to deteriorate. In general, during this first period, America was most ready to co-operate with Europe when the countries of Europe were on good terms with each other ; and there was a better prospect of her adhering in order to put the coping-stone to the structure of an international system that seemed to be already almost complete than to fill a gap caused by defections. It was thus in the period of conciliation that followed the evacuation of the Ruhr, the Dawes reparation agreement, and the Briand-Stresemann-Chamberlain policy of Locarno, that America advanced furthest towards association with Europe. Had the European situation continued to improve, the structure of a real international system might have been completed by the interpretation and development which the Stimson policy was giving to the Kellogg Pact, not as an alternative to the League of Nations, but as a means of co-operating with it. Conversely, as the European situation then

deteriorated, the isolationist movement increased and the neutrality legislation replaced the Kellogg Pact as the principal expression of the outlook of the greater part of the American people.

I have always thought that the statement of the anti-isolationist case on the assumption common to both sides, of an immunity from actual invasion, was in some respects mistaken. The true position would, I think, have been more accurately put in the following form.

America was so strong and invulnerable that, if a European war came, she would still be able to choose whether to intervene or not, whatever she might have done or said previously, short of contracting an actual defensive alliance. No belligerent would wantonly attack her merely because of resentment at her previous interventions in foreign affairs. Nothing except her own decision to use her forces in the struggle would bring her into the war, and her freedom of decision would be scarcely affected by anything she had done beforehand. She was completely invulnerable so long as the Western democracies remained as Great Powers. At the same time this invulnerability, together with her economic strength, would give her a power to intervene in world affairs without risk of reprisal, or forfeiture of her freedom of decision to take part or not if war came, which would be similar to that enjoyed by Great Britain in the nineteenth century.

If a general European war came, the first result would be an economic dislocation for America, as for other countries, which might be partly compensated, to an extent that would depend upon the neutrality legislation, by a stimulus to certain classes of exports. As the war progressed she might decide to intervene either because incidents occurred which would present her with the alternatives of suffering loss and humiliation or of fighting ; or because the issue was such as to enlist her indignant sympathy on one side ; or because the prospect of the

defeat of the democracies would threaten her future. But in any case she would be free to decide, and equally free whatever her policy (short of binding commitment) in peace might have been. After the war, it was to be expected that the world's whole economic and financial structure would be damaged, as it was in the last war but probably even more seriously, with a resulting impoverishment in America altogether greater than any she would have experienced during the war itself or immediately afterwards. This was inescapable. The world depression and financial crisis of 1929 and 1931, from which America suffered as much as, or more, than any other great country, was mainly the result of dislocation originating in the war. Countries like America which had sustained a relatively small strain in the war itself were affected as much as those which, like France, had been exhausted. Switzerland, which had been neutral, was damaged as much by this delayed repercussion of the war as a belligerent like Belgium. It was the breakdown in the general financial and economic structure of the world, through strains resulting mainly from the war, that caused universal distress to all alike. America therefore suffered in 1931 not because she had participated in the war, but because there *was* a war.

Since, then — the anti-isolationists might justly have argued at any time during this period — America would suffer economic dislocation at once if a war came ; since the issue might be such that she would feel that she must fight whatever her previous policy had been ; and since she was bound to suffer the more serious dislocation that comes after a time-lag as the result of any great war, whether she had participated or not — she obviously had a strong inducement to prevent war coming if she could. Her influence could be potent for peace. Since she was both powerful and invulnerable, she could exert her influence without increasing her risk of being involved if war came. She could do so without even impairing

her freedom to decide, in the war itself, whether or not to intervene. On these grounds an active policy would seem to have been clearly in her interests.

This was a reasonable and perhaps adequate statement of the case against isolation until a few years ago.

(b) *Second Period.*—In recent years, however, the whole perspective of America's problem has changed. As the strength and ambitions of the dictatorship powers have increased, a new set of considerations have been transforming the American attitude. No longer does a growing menace in Europe increase the strength of the isolationist movement. It tends to have the opposite effect, and incidentally to cause a considerable shifting of people and groups from each side to the other.

It is not merely, or mainly, that American public opinion has become increasingly indignant at the inhumanity and illegality with which the Axis Powers have attacked the independence of one free State after another and have barbarously persecuted both Jews and political opponents, though it is this which is the most obvious factor. There is another more enduring and potent force at work which goes to the very heart of America's interests.

The Axis Powers are challenging the fundamental political ideals which are the basis of the American Republic, and of which she is the greatest and most powerful representative. But this is not all. These Powers have so increased their strength that the danger of actual aggression upon America, though it could only come after a defeat of the European democracies, is no longer an unreal one.

For America, while completely invulnerable so long as the European democracies remain as Great Powers, would at once lose her immunity if they should ever be destroyed. And while it is probable that the Axis Powers would fail in an attempt to defeat and dominate Great Britain and France, America no longer regards it as certain that they

This danger is so vital a factor in determining America's attitude that it needs further consideration. •

We have remarked that the whole of America's history has turned upon her exceptional immunity from the impact of external events, an immunity which is in part due to the obvious facts of her geographical situation, and in part to causes which are not so evident and, till recently, have not been so commonly recognised.

It is behind the shelter of this immunity that America in the nineteenth century achieved her industrial prosperity, founded upon freedom of trade from ocean to ocean ; welded the races of Europe into a single nation united by the " American idea " ; extended the authority of a federal government and common political ideals across a continent. But the shelter she enjoyed was not that of the oceans alone. Oceans are not impassable, even to armed forces ; they are no barrier to ideas, and the conflicts and rival political ambitions of the races from which the American nation was formed must always find some response and reaction within her own society. In her progress throughout the nineteenth century she enjoyed the advantage, not only of ocean isolation, but of the existence of an international order, imperfect indeed, but in all that concerned her sufficient. The seas of the world were policed under the command of a Power with political ideas compatible, and indeed in the most essential particulars identical, with her own. Ideas of self-government and personal liberty were embodied in the constitution of most of the great States of the world (though with certain defects and latent weaknesses that were later to prove serious) and were inspiring political movements in others. It was in a security that depended not only upon physical separation but also upon this measure of international order, and upon the political equipoise with which it was associated in Europe and the rest of the world, that America achieved her own development. She thus had an advantage that no great State has ever before

enjoyed to the same degree in the history of the world.

This is a factor in the evolution of American history which can be better dealt with by an American than an English pen. I will therefore venture to recall a remarkable article by Mr. Walter Lippmann in *Foreign Affairs* of July 1937. Mr. Lippmann takes as his starting point the neutrality legislation of that summer. He points out that it was prompted by those who were critical of America's participation in the last war, suspicious of all influences in favour of American intervention in European problems and anxious to secure, to the utmost possible extent, a policy of neutrality and isolation. Nevertheless, he says, the "fundamental decision of the American Congress" was to "confine American war trade to the nations which have money and have ships and command the seas", that is, in effect, in the actual European issue, to those who stand for democracy against dictatorship. He proceeds to search for an explanation of this apparent paradox.

"The instinctive feeling of almost all Americans [he says] is to keep Europe at arm's length. It is not true to say that the philosophy of isolationists is the selfishness and timidity of a people blessed with geographical security. The philosophy of isolation has its roots in the protective instincts of a people who cannot hope to fuse as a nation if they are not secure against the passions of their European ancestors. The theory of neutrality which crystallised in American minds during the 19th century was entertained in a world in which Great Britain exercised unchallenged supremacy over the principal maritime highways. It was assumed that in time of war Britain would be mistress of the seas, that her fleet would successfully bottle up the war in a relatively small area, so that underneath all controversies, the predominance of British sea-power was not challenged. On the contrary it was tacitly assumed. The international world in which the American nation matured and conceived its native policy was a world in which Britain controlled the seas. The invisible, the unexamined and unrecognised premise of American isolation has always been an international system in which naval power in British hands is

predominant over all other military power. The whole conception of isolation presupposes an international power so great that it can restrain all military conquerors. Such an international system existed in the century between Waterloo and the Marne, and all our preoccupations about world politics implicitly assume the continuation of such a system. A fatal blow struck at the heart of the British power would not merely destroy the international unity of the Empire; it would mean the destruction of all international order as we know it. We have only to imagine our own position if the British supremacy were to collapse under an attack by Germany in the North Atlantic, by Italy in the Mediterranean, by Japan in the Western Pacific. All that is familiar and taken for granted, like the air we breathe, would be drastically altered. Thus, though it is no doubt written in the book of fate that Britain will no longer carry on alone the authority she exercised in the 19th century, it is also written in that book that our civilisation is doomed to another dark age unless that authority can be perpetuated by people who intend to live by the same political tradition. The great question is whether a nation placed as we are, and desiring above all else to live and let live, can preserve its isolation if there is no power in the world which preserves the order of the world.

The answer to that question is, I am convinced, that we can and that we will stand aside only as long as we feel that there is no fatal challenge to the central power which makes for order in our world. Our unconscious wisdom is the deposit of a century of experience. In that century of American isolation an organic and inseparable connection was formed between the life of the American nation and an international order held together through supreme authority exercised by men who in great matters think as we do. We cannot break that connection. We could not break it in 1917. We have declared that we cannot break it in 1937. We shall not break it. In the final test, no matter what we wish now or now believe, though collaboration with Britain and her allies is difficult and often irritating, we shall protect that connection because in no other way can we fulfil our destiny."

It is with similar considerations in mind that Mr. Henry L. Stimson gave evidence before the Foreign

Relations Committee of the Senate on April 5th, 1939. After reviewing the successive attacks by the Axis Powers, "all in violation of former treaties and of international law, upon Manchuria, North China, South China, Ethiopia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Lithuania", he pointed out that strategically the three nations concerned have occupied favourable positions for an attack on their peace-loving neighbours, and that they were acting skilfully together. Their relation to American lines of communication and national defence made "common action in such defence practically imperative if it is to be successful. This naval situation", he said, made "ducks and drakes of our former customs and traditions." The ancient slogan of isolation "begins to look a little obsolete".

"Notwithstanding the unmatched opportunity [he added] of the United States for self-containment in the maintenance of its defence, the real question to-day is one of method. How shall these great advantages be most effectively used, not only with regard to our own safety for the present year of Our Lord, but for the future? . . .

Shall we be content to sit idly in this present security which may be only momentary, or shall we use these great advantages carefully and moderately but firmly and intelligently to help to protect the world, which includes ourselves, from its imminent and continuing danger?

By reason of our present security we can do this more safely than can any other nation. And the fact that we are known to be ready to do so will not only tend to slow down the Axis, the members of which know that language very well, but — what is even more important — will at the same time encourage their intended victims not to make surrenders which will ultimately endanger us."

The attitude of the American people to current events is thus determined by their impact upon a psychology in which there were already conflicting elements; a traditional and instinctive desire to be neutral and isolated; a



to the very continuance of international order which had for so long been taken for granted was also a menace to the vital interests of America ; and with it a growing recognition that the most powerful State in the world could not either safely or honourably refuse to accept a responsibility for the maintenance of that order upon which the secure development of every separate nation and community must so largely depend.

### *Reproaches and Misunderstandings*

It is one of the advantages of a period of common danger that countries, like individuals, begin to realise more clearly and more consciously the community of interests and ideals which at other times they may forget. We appreciate the importance of the fact that we, the democracies of the world, want the same kind of world and are each content with our own share of it ; that we believe in the same fundamental principles of government, based upon representative institutions and individual liberty rooted in the rule of law — now that all these are sharply challenged and gravely threatened. Long-standing differences and misunderstandings which at other times occupied the forefront of our attention tend to become less important.

Nevertheless these differences do not immediately disappear, and though they may not permanently prevent an adaptation of policy to the new conditions, they may impede and postpone it — perhaps fatally.

There is, indeed, one factor that may even tend to make reproaches and reciprocal irritations between America and the European democracies for a moment more acute at times of danger than at other times ; and though this is a difficult and delicate matter to discuss, I think the attempt is worth while.

The inner conflict in the American attitude to Europe has some very natural and human psychological conse-

quences of which those whom they influence are usually unconscious. A man whose judgement urges him to a course of action against the pull of his instincts and desires has a strong subconscious urge to emphasise any reasons which may reconcile his instincts with his judgement. Any apparent errors or remissness or misdeeds of the European democracies may easily be condemned the more severely by those who, without realising it consciously, have an inner conflict in their minds of this kind. For the greater the responsibility which is assigned to Great Britain and France for the present situation, the greater seems the justification for any other country to keep aloof from the consequences. In these circumstances it is easy for the mind to be moved by a kind of subconscious urge to stress any of their faults. Now the history of the last quarter of a century is so complex, and the errors of every principal country so numerous, that it is only too easy, by concentrating upon the faults of any one of them, to come to believe that that country is chiefly to blame for what has happened — and to get an alibi for oneself. Is there not, in fact, some psychological force of this kind in operation when great emphasis is laid upon the misdoings of Great Britain and of France precisely at the time when they are in the greatest danger? I would ask those who feel an increased inclination at such a time to criticise particular actions of those with whom they know they are, in the most fundamental matters, in sympathy, and with whom they are united in an ultimate identity of interest, to search into the springs of their emotions. What I am suggesting is a natural effect of a universal trait in human psychology, but it leads to mistaken or at least disproportionate judgements.

It is, moreover, the more regrettable because it encounters another equally natural psychological reaction on the part of those who are so judged.

Consider the feelings of a citizen of a European country when aggression is threatened against some other

State. He knows that the safety of his own country is indirectly menaced by this threat to the international order. He sees the reason for his country acting, but he doubts whether it, and those who would act with it, are strong enough to act successfully. Inevitably he thinks with envy and a mixture of despair and hope of the great country which could exercise so great an influence at so infinitely less a risk. He is in no mood to consider coolly why it is that the U.S.A. limits its action to restrained and cautious comments. He is in a mood to be acutely sensitive to any comments from it on the indecisions or fluctuation in the policy of his own country.

All these varying psychological factors are illustrated by the reaction to the Czechoslovak disaster. There were many elements in that crisis on which I do not now propose to comment, beyond remarking that the problem was much more complex than seems to have been generally recognised in the discussion of it. But among them was certainly the strategic position and the formidable difficulty of protecting the country, and the character of the resulting war, if there were one. As an Englishman I feel the shame and humiliation of this aspect of the Munich agreement, and the dire consequences that have followed. I realise too, however, the terrible nature of the dilemma presented both to France and Great Britain. The threat was directed immediately not to their own territory but to a country separated from them by the fortifications and arms of the assailant. It was, however, a democracy and a pillar of the international society from whose destruction they, and all similar countries, would suffer. Should they risk a war in which, if it came, it would be scarcely possible to save the country they wished to defend from being overrun, and in which there was at least a substantial chance of irreparable injury to themselves? They declined that risk. We may in Europe reproach ourselves, or each other. But are there not certain questions which Americans should put to them-

selves before they join in these reproaches ?

I believe that I understand and appreciate, as I hope indeed that I have shown in this book and elsewhere, the causes which separated America from the attempt to establish an effective League of Nations after the war, and thus relieved her of the measure of responsibility which rested upon Great Britain at the time of the Czechoslovak crisis. Her interests, too, though ultimately affected, were much more remote. She had no commitments ; and certainly the President at that time did all that he could, as he has done since, within the limits set by the main lines of American policy and by the traditional attitude of the American people, to exert a helpful influence. All that is true. But it is also true, of course, that America was not in fact at that time assuming any risk in respect of the defence of international law, and that even if she had accepted a responsibility like our own by being a member of the League of Nations, her actual risks would have been very small indeed by comparison with what was involved for European States. As a member of the League, she could by the prospect of economic sanctions have exercised a deterrent influence which would probably have been decisive and would probably have not involved her in a war. And, even if war had come, it would have had very much less serious consequences for a country three thousand miles away than for those whose capitals are within an hour of hostile bombers. The reasons for America's abstention from the League system, and therefore from any effective responsibility in regard to a particular European crisis, are easily to be understood. But should not that abstention, I would respectfully suggest, at least induce a certain hesitation and restraint in her criticism of others ?

To an Englishman or Frenchman, on the other hand, who has felt bitterly sometimes that if all the democracies were together facing the challenge to all alike all would be safe, I would say : " You know how far you have

gone in seeking an isolation from the dangers of others, even where the geographical situation made such isolation, in the long run, patently impossible. If there had been three thousand miles of sea between you and the danger, would you in fact have been in favour of intervention? Perhaps you would have realised intellectually that you ought to, and that it was in your interest to do so; but are you confident in fact that you would have?" An honest answer would in most cases change their mood. To an American, however, I would in turn say: "Will you consider coolly what exactly was involved in the action you are blaming others for not having taken; the extent and character of the risk; the extent and character of the risk that would have been involved by your country taking an active part in the maintenance of the peace system during the previous years; how small was the chance that it would bring you into war, how small in comparison the loss and sacrifice that war would involve for you, even if it did? And do you not then understand why it is that even if a Frenchman or an Englishman feels regret and humiliation at the September decision, and may listen with some shame, and without resentment, to reproaches from any European, he cannot accept them from an American?"

Such candid heart-searchings might at least reduce the reciprocal irritations that complicate and may deflect the course of policy.

We should, however, deceive ourselves in Europe if we thought that the criticisms and suspicions which are so current in America are to be explained, and explained away, by any such considerations as we have just discussed. They may be exaggerated for these reasons but they do not originate in them. Deep in the American psychology is a profound disillusionment with the last war. America's participation in that war is not so much a precedent as a bitter memory. The American public supported intervention not because they thought that

direct American interests were at stake, but because they were in sympathy with the general cause for which they understood France and Great Britain to be standing. They hoped to make the world safe for democracy ; they hoped they would be helping to establish conditions in Europe upon which both peace and prosperity would be more securely established. The Treaty of Versailles and the ensuing record of European government have caused deep disillusionment. The American public have not realised the complexity of the difficulties which confronted the statesmen of Europe, especially after America's own withdrawal, but they have seen the results ; and when it is suggested that they should again help to defend democracy they remember bitterly their last experience. They threw in their might in defence of a great world purpose, and they have seen that purpose frustrated, and as they feel betrayed ; they lent their treasure and the debt has not been repaid ; they saw the victory they helped to win abused for national ends for which they have no sympathy. In this disillusionment many have come to believe, mistakenly but understandably, that they were deceived in 1917 by the Allies or some of their own leaders. There is a powerful case to be made on the other side, but it is not surprising that it should have failed to convince so many of the American public, including those who would most desire the policy of their country to be directed less to material ends than to a worthy ideal. It is these memories and experiences which may to some degree obscure the present issue of the future of democracy and free government, which this time is certainly menaced and more seriously than before. The youth and idealism of America feel that they need more than a simple appeal to defend democracy. They require some real conception and assurance of all that is implied and involved. They need a deeper philosophy to sustain them which will be at once idealistic and realistic. Had America been working in the League of Nations system

for twenty years, or had the full implications of the Kellogg Pact been developed, American idealism and the hard reality of European difficulties might together have produced such a philosophy. Separation has resulted in American idealists often having their feet off the ground and European realists rarely lifting their eyes from it.

The task is still to do. But, under the potent forces that have now been set into operation, it *can* be done. The democracies of Europe also need a policy and a purpose which can inspire them in the trials that await them ; to have peace aims for which they can work, which will, if need be, also be the war aims for which they will fight — and the basis of a new, and this time more enduring, peace if they have the power to achieve it. A later part of this book will discuss this need and make a few tentative suggestions, but for any adequately constructive policy the contribution of American thought and idealism is indispensable.

There is one part of this problem upon which Great Britain in particular would do well to reflect. We are now acutely conscious, as the British Commonwealth is now so seriously menaced, of what this vast system of nations, creeds and government, all united under the same sovereign, means not only for Great Britain but for the world. We believe, and genuinely believe, that deeper than any material interests of our own, we are really bearing and discharging a trusteeship on behalf of a large part of the world's population. The Dominions are now fully masters of their own destiny ; India is rapidly approaching the same position ; the colonies are in different stages along the same path towards the self-government which, in our minds as in theirs, is the ultimate goal. We know that a sudden abandonment of the colonies which are at the earlier stages of their progress would be disastrous for them, and injurious to the world ; we believe that cessions to any colonial Power which has no similar traditions and purpose would be no

less disastrous. We are at the same time conscious that this conception of our trust, which for many of us at least is unalloyed and sincere, is disbelieved and even ridiculed elsewhere. "British Imperialism" is suspect in other countries, and most certainly by a large part of American opinion. We feel with some bitterness that the suspicions are to a large extent based upon exaggerated accounts of past misdeeds and distorted views of present policy. Yes : all this is true, but it is not the whole truth. Trusteeship is not all that the Colonies mean for Great Britain, though it is very real and a very large part of it. Material interests are involved as well, both economic and strategic ; and the recent changes both in the commercial policies and the military dangers of recent years have given them both more importance. As Englishmen we need to face, and face honestly, the full implications of the conceptions of trusteeship. If we really are trustees, we must, in my view, be ready to accept an accountability to an authority constituted from other countries as well as our own ; to administer the colonies in conformity with a code which they as well as we agree to be just — and more than that, to be ready to transfer a part of our responsibility, on the one vital and indispensable condition that the governing authority to which any transfer is made is one which will worthily discharge the trust committed to it. The colonial problem is a real and inescapable one. It is not to be solved merely by abandonment or by transfer. It needs the best ability and the best purpose the world can command ; and what America has to give is not merely criticism but a constructive contribution ; what we should be ready to offer is a similar contribution — and a readiness to forgo specific imperial rights and interests in order to facilitate an appropriate world solution for what is essentially a world problem. This question is discussed at greater length later, but it was necessary to mention it here as a factor in the relations between America and the European democracies. The



American who would wish to see preserved and developed the ideals of Government which America herself represents has no similar impulse to preserve what he often understands by "British Imperialism". The British Empire is in fact much more than British Imperialism, but we in Great Britain would do well to search our hearts, and our policy, to see whether there is not in fact something in both, though much less than our critics imagine, which should be eliminated. And in both the development and the declaration of all our policy, we should do well to have these considerations always in our minds. If we want more than a national support for our cause, our cause must be more than a national one. The world will only unite for a world purpose.

### *Good Neighbour and Good Citizen*

It is not, however, likely that reciprocal irritations, or misunderstandings, or reproaches, will ultimately decide the course of events. In the last resort the determining factor is the one which has been discussed at length in the earlier part of this chapter.

As the bastions of democracy fall one by one, and the rest are threatened, as the whole international order which America has been accustomed to take for granted is seen more clearly to be in grave peril, the sense of responsibility and direct interest is growing.

The choice which America now has, upon which the fate of Europe and her own civilisation may depend, may perhaps be stated as a choice between being only a good neighbour or being also a good citizen. A good neighbour is one who lives in harmony with those round him, does them no injury, respects their rights, and gives charitable assistance in times of distress. A good citizen is one who, in addition, takes a share proportionate to his ability and opportunity in constructing and helping to carry on the structure of government and administration which enables

us as individuals to live and work under tolerable conditions. Good-neighbourliness alone will never suffice by itself unless all within the community are good neighbours ; till that remote day, government, and therefore good citizenship, is also essential. America is, and will be, a good neighbour. Will she also be a good citizen of the world ? President Roosevelt has frequently proclaimed the doctrine of the good neighbour and so far he carries his people with him. Can he carry his people with him in adding to it the doctrine of the good citizen ?

The message to the world and the questions to the dictators, which were addressed from Washington in the middle of April, show how important a part America can play, under great leadership, in spite of all the limiting conditions that have here been discussed. That intervention may have averted an immediate act of aggression. It may even place the whole international conflict, for a time, upon the plane of propaganda instead of military action. It has penetrated to the mind of the peoples of both Germany and Italy. It has given hope and renewed vigour to the democracies. It is a powerful addition to the forces that may yet avert the worst. And if the worst comes it will have clarified the whole issue for the world, and for America herself. Aggression has hitherto set the pace. But the democracies too are beginning to show that they can be swift and effective in their reactions.

Well, these are the factors, so far as I can analyse them, which may determine American policy. They are for Americans to advocate and to consider, not for us. What remains as relevant to our present problem ? I suggest this :

American influence, even within its present limitations, is of immense value. It may, however, count for too little as a deterrent to a country gambling on a quick knock-out blow. It will be of much more importance, if, by eliminating any chance of a quick decision, we in Europe can place the whole calculations of power politics

on to the plane of a prospective long conflict. Even then, however, we shall do best to reckon that the aggressor may expect America only to facilitate supplies to the democracies rather than to intervene more actively. We shall do well not to reckon upon an alliance, or such binding commitments as would make America a factor of an importance fully equivalent to her strength. We must therefore do all we can to cultivate the best relations and thus increase the chances of assistance, but not overestimate them. In the whole issue before us, America counts a great deal, may count for more, but does not in the immediate crisis exert an influence proportionate to her real might.

Thus it is well for an Englishman or a Frenchman to reason. But if I were a German or an Italian I should equally ponder certain further considerations. I should observe that the temper of public opinion in America is already more like that of 1917 than that of 1914. I should contrast the recent pronouncements of President Roosevelt with those of President Wilson at different stages of the last war. I should reflect that the fundamental political ideals on which the American Republic is founded are much more directly, obviously and dangerously menaced now than in 1914. I should meditate upon the unexhausted and inexhaustible resources of that country ; and I should ask myself whether dictatorship States which aim at destroying the democracies of Europe must not count the might of the greatest democracy if they are reckoning their chances of victory. I should ask whether, if that might is added to the scales, victory is likely — and even if victory were for the moment achieved, whether its fruits would be retained and enjoyed.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ECONOMICS OF DICTATORSHIPS

WE have considered what determines German policy. We must consider also her strength to pursue it, and in this her economic system is an important element. In "total" and mechanised warfare the conflict between nations is a conflict between their economic resources and organisations. Success will attend those who can produce the most and best of all that is needed to sustain a war effort.

We must therefore discuss how the strength of the Fascist Powers is affected by what is distinctive in their economic systems and policies. These differ in some respects in the different dictatorship countries. It will, however, be sufficient for our purpose to consider the system of Germany, and in doing so to deal only with main principles without attempting a detailed analysis, for which a separate book would be required.

The total material resources that a country can utilise in a war for actual fighting, and for the sustenance of both its combatants and non-combatants, consist in part of what can be made by the skill and industry of its own citizens from materials within its own military and political control ; and in part of what it can buy, for cash or credit, or what its own citizens can only make with materials so acquired.

This distinction is of importance because the inducements which can be offered differ in the two cases. In the one the prospect of obtaining the wherewithal to live, or of gain, can be combined with other forms of inducement. In the other, it must stand alone. A German citizen may be compelled, or induced, to do for the

German State what he would be unwilling to do for a purely economic motive ; a citizen of the United States cannot be so induced. From the latter country Germany can only obtain commodities, or the materials required to make them, by means of offering a money which is of value where it is used. This she can only obtain by selling goods which the purchaser is willing to buy or by raising loans available in the belief that she will be able, by means of a future sale of such goods, to pay the interest and capital later.

### *The Rôle of Money*

This needs to be emphasised, because it determines the rôle of money, and the whole mechanism of finance, and the limits of their influence upon all that affects a war effort. Many people speak of financial factors without realising these limits. Let us say then quite definitely, that so far as a country has the man-power, the skill and the materials required to produce what it wants, and the will and the methods of inducement or compulsion to secure that they shall be utilised, no shortage of money will limit its effort.

Money is an inducement to supply services or goods ; and for all internal purposes it can be made as required or supplemented by other forms of inducement. Only for what is needed from outside countries does money constitute an absolute limit. This is one reason why every country that has been directing its main policy towards war has also been aiming at the greatest practicable increase of self-sufficiency.

Self-sufficiency in a country's resources is for almost every country an unobtainable ideal. But some can approach it much more nearly than others, and all can get nearer to it by an intensive preparatory effort in the discovery of substitutes, and so far as that does not suffice, by laying in reserves. Germany has not the natural advantages of Russia or the U.S.A., but she stands in the

next rank, being much more self-sufficient than either Italy, Japan or ourselves, and by the two methods mentioned she has done more than any of us, or France, to provide for such deficiencies as she may still have. And she has added a third method of the greatest importance, by including in the Reich countries which had hitherto been independent and had therefore only furnished their supplies on ordinary trading terms, or by exerting a form of political pressure upon them which may assure her of their resources.

Blockade, from the point of view of the countries against which it is applied, rather duplicates than doubles the impediment of a shortage of the money (foreign exchange) which can be used to purchase foreign supplies. If a country was completely blockaded, shortage of foreign exchange would be no additional impediment ; it would be of no importance. If a country had no foreign exchange and could get none either by exports or upon loan, blockade would not be required. This relationship between blockade and shortage of foreign exchange also holds good even when each has a partial effect. If, for example, we prevent Germany from importing oil from the other side of the Atlantic, we save her the foreign exchange which she would otherwise have expended on it, and leave her to use it for purchases from contiguous countries where sea blockade is inapplicable. We must, however, of course remember that blockade will also prevent a country from selling the exports from which it would obtain foreign exchange, and may make the purchase of a commodity which it cannot dispense with more expensive.

What has been said above does not mean that money is of no importance inside a dictatorship system, and that anything which affects the monetary system can be disregarded. Money is an invaluable instrument for giving a stimulus, for aiding distribution, and for securing a suitable allocation of resources and effort within the wide range left by even the most meticulous control systems.

If money were abolished the bureaucracy would have to supply the stimulus for every individual action, would have to decide just what every man should receive, and everything in the closest detail that everyone should do ; and it would be a task which would surpass the limits alike of human knowledge and discipline. All dictatorship countries therefore use money, while making it the instrument of a policy enforced through control at crucial points.

### *Inflation and State Control*

An illustration will serve to show how far the maintenance of a sound currency system is important to them. It was remarked above that if there is not enough money the State can make more. Yes, but if it does so out of proportion to any increased production of purchasable goods, general prices will rise. The whole structure of wage rates and prices through which the mechanism of production and distribution operates, within the points at which Government policy is enforced through control, would be altered, and if the process continued would be destroyed. This is especially true in a country like Germany, where the memories of the inflation period of 1923 would help to destroy all confidence in the future purchasing power of the currency as soon as prices began to rise seriously. Certain barriers can be, and are, erected against this process in the form of wage controls and price controls, but these could not stand a great strain. If there is a large excess of purchasing capacity in the country in the form of money over what can be bought at existing prices, the first result will be an inability to buy all that is asked at these prices ; the second, the growth of secret supplementary payments ; the third, the breakdown of the control. If that happened, the bureaucracy would have lost the service of money as an instrument and would have the task already described, which would be infinitely more difficult and would be likely to prove beyond its capacity.

We shall see what this means when we consider the crux of the present monetary and financial problem. In the meantime, however, we must note that the rôle of money in a controlled system, though still important, is secondary and subordinate. What is made and done is determined to a much greater extent than under free systems by decision of the Government and not by the choice of the consumer or the estimates of the entrepreneur. First the Government's direct orders on armaments and public works form a much larger proportion of the total. Second, exchange control, and the rationing of foreign exchange and its supply at varying terms, enable the Government to stop the purchase of all foreign imports which it decides not to be desirable and to encourage those it does ; third, the rationing of credit through the banks, in conformity with Government policy and decisions, together with the absorption of money available beyond current necessities through taxation and voluntary or forced loans, confines the use of money in the internal economy of the country to the uses which the Government approves. Lastly, wage controls, with restriction upon the mobility of labour, and price controls, serve as additional bulwarks against the escape of economic processes outside the ringed fence of Government policy. The system as a whole enables the Government to secure that the full effort of the country is directed as it desires.

### *The Finance of Herr Schacht*

The way in which the system works and the crux which it has now reached was explained by Herr Schacht in a speech he delivered in November 1938. The essence of what he says may be briefly summarised. The enormous amount of work directly undertaken by the State, partly in increasing armaments, partly in such public works as motorways, was (with the drafting of more men into the Army) sufficient to absorb the unemployed labour.



How was this work financed? There was no available capital to be raised by loan, and money had to be created. The orthodox economic doctrine only allows the creation of money when the goods in circulation have already increased, and forbids a sudden expansion of currency, for in an uncontrolled economy a large increase of money must lead to rising prices and wages and so to tensions which in time result in an economic crisis. With a State-controlled economy, however, it is possible under certain conditions to avoid rises in prices and wages. Expansion of credit was used in Germany to produce a greater amount of goods; and since not only armaments, but also the supply of the goods which the additional workers employed in armaments bought with their wages, were so increased, the general ratio between supply and demand was not disturbed, and prices did not rise. There was no inflation, in spite of methods of financing which are usually termed inflationary, and would indeed cause a general rise of prices but for the special conditions just mentioned. There is, of course, a limit to this process. As the possibilities of drawing additional men into productive work, either from unemployment or the distributive system, or of utilising women not previously engaged in production, or of increasing production for each unit of labour by improved technique are exhausted, the method of financing just described can no longer be used. The only alternatives are then inflation, that is, a general rise of prices with all its consequences; or the withdrawal of more money by the State from what already exists in private hands, by means of taxation, voluntary or enforced loans, or confiscation; or a limitation of State expenditure.

### *Germany's Present Financial Position*

This is the crucial point which Germany has been reaching in recent months. It is instructive to notice the signs of this and the measures adopted. The first indica-

tions of a probable inflation were seen in a tendency of the wage control to break. Here and there, on fortification work and in certain districts in other occupations, wages began to rise substantially above the previous and general level. If this had continued, the result must soon have been a large increase in purchasing power obtained through wages without any corresponding increase in the goods to be purchased. This would at once have been brought up against the price controls. So long as these held, the first phenomenon would have been one of scarcity: that is, while the goods remained nominally cheap, they would not have been available for all who wished to buy them. No price controls could long resist such a strain. An illicit market would develop; and soon prices generally would rise.

This is the explanation of the additional restrictions imposed in February 1939 upon the mobility of labour. The problem of how to pay for current State expenditure was now acute, since finance could no longer be obtained, for the reasons just given, by the simple creation of new credit. Additional taxation was scarcely practicable, for the taxpayer had no margin. Similarly the limits to loans, whether voluntary or enforced, were narrow, for there was no margin of available capital. In these circumstances spoliation of the Jews was a useful help for the moment and was probably decided upon largely because of the financial stringency. The cash resources of Austria, carefully nursed as a sequel to the League of Nations reconstruction, were a further windfall; and now those of Czechoslovakia have been added. As such resources come to an end, the alternatives of inflation, taxation, enforced loans or the restriction of expenditure again return. The decision to make payment for Government work and supplies to the extent of 40 per cent in the form of tax receipts is an indication that the difficulty is acute. In the absence of fresh resources from outside, it can only postpone the real crux for a very short time, and a restriction of Government expenditure will be the only alternative to a general

inflation with all the disorganisation and discontent which it would entail.

In other words, Germany has, as far as her internal resources within her original frontiers are concerned, about reached the limit of her expansion of armaments expenditure, and may have to reduce it.

This is the sense in which financial strain will affect the military effort. It is a real and important factor, of which there may soon be visible consequences, if there is still to be a long armaments race without actual war.

At the same time the significance of this factor must not be either misinterpreted or exaggerated. It is in itself one of the forces making for an early war, and may be one of the signs of an intention to force a rapid decision. Alternatively, its consequences may be mitigated by exploiting the resources of the new countries brought within the Reich. In any case we must remember that the difficulty is in itself an expression of the fact that the full man-power of Germany is now being utilised, under about as great a strain as can be sustained, and with the standard of living about as low as it can be without serious effects upon physique and working capacity. That does indeed mean that the limit to Germany's expansion of armaments production (within her original frontiers) is reached. But it also means that the rate which has been attained is much higher than in countries with a free system like our own.

Certain economic factors, in addition to difficulties of finance, should also be mentioned. There are some signs of a reaction from the continued strain of long hours, and of a reduction in output. These are not decisive, but it is important to reflect that physical fatigue may easily be combined with any discontent or disapproval of the political purposes of the régime. Under an efficient and relentless tyranny, with modern arms at its disposal, a passive and partial strike in the form of a slackening-off of work is almost the only practicable means of protest.

If the dissatisfaction were general and deep, it might be very effective, the more because it might operate, without organisation or even deliberate intention, to increase the effect of physical fatigue and be indistinguishable from it by any form of supervision. This, however, must be regarded as little more than a possibility of the future. The evidence of any slackening in work is at present slight. There is, however, more evidence that, in the interests of the immediate increase in production, capital plant has been allowed to run down. The railways have certainly deteriorated, and in many cases plant engaged in munitions manufacture has been overworked, and insufficient effort has been made to maintain it. This sacrifice of the future to the present is one of the signs of an intention to make 1939, rather than a later year, the year of decision; though, while it is evidence, it is insufficient to amount to proof.

Here again we have a limit to any further increase in production; but here again it is one which reflects the abnormal achievement already reached.

It is important, therefore, that we should not be misled by the indications of financial and economic strains, which in fact mean that the full production capacity has been made effective, into thinking that Germany's system handicaps her in a competitive effort with ourselves. There can be no doubt that, for an intensive effort in rearmament, the German system has some great advantages in comparison with our own. The effort that is being made, and the system which has been constructed, are very closely analogous with our own purpose and system in the latter part of the last war; and our achievement in that period merits the closest study if we wish to understand the character and potentialities of the present German methods.

In this connection I may perhaps quote a comment which I made just after the war on the results of our own control system while it lasted.

*The British War Control in 1918*

"The peace economic system", I wrote in *Allied Shipping Control*, "by the exacting criterion of war conditions, produced too little, it produced the wrong things, and it distributed them to the wrong people."

The peace system produced too little. It is true that it had the advantage of the spur of individual enterprise and individual profit. But in its actual working the exact adjustment effected by the economic process to the individual taste of the consumer and to the strength of his economic demand proved to involve the allocation of an enormous proportion of work to what may, in its widest sense, be called distribution as distinct from production. The economic system, surveyed suddenly from the central standpoint of State control, was seen to be swarming with middlemen of every description whose work was not to produce but to dispose of what was produced. In the whole system marketing occupied a disproportionate place as compared with making. Whatever the need for the diversion of so much productive power to non-productive tasks under the conditions of peace, a very much bigger allocation to production was possible in war. In war the excess of demand over supply disposes of the marketing problem. The State knows what it wants and can produce in mass. It can in a day decide upon an order equal to the individual orders of hundreds of thousands of separate consumers which would require the employment of thousands of middlemen and other distributing agents. And the commodities which have to be distributed to the civilian population are necessities of life, for which at such times the demand always exceeds the supply. The difficulty is therefore not to dispose of the goods but to ration them fairly. Under these special conditions of mass orders by the Government and a pressure of demand from the civilian population, which removed the problem of marketing, the economies of central control proved enormous.

And if the ordinary economic system produced too little it also produced the wrong things and distributed them to the wrong people. Production and distribution were adjusted

under that system not to essential need but to effective economic demand. Under the new standards of necessity, however, it could no longer be assumed that real importance was measured with sufficient precision by purchasing power. It became impossible for the poor to be left to express the importance of their own need for bread by outbidding the rich. So long as wheat and the ships to carry it are abundant the rich man's power of economic demand does not mean starvation to the poor man. He does not consume a hundred times more bread because his income is a hundred times greater. A point of surfeit is reached and the poor can still buy the bread they want. But once wheat or the other necessities of life or their means of transport are reduced to a bare sufficiency, the tolerable inequalities of the ordinary economic system pass the point of endurance. If there is only bread enough for bare physical needs and not for the full appetite, the unrestricted economic haggle involves surfeit here and starvation there. It was to meet these deficiencies of the normal system that the new methods of State control were gradually introduced.

There is probably no task at this moment which more deserves the attention of professional economists who will approach the problem in a purely scientific spirit, without bias either for or against the general principle of State control, than an investigation of the actual results of the war period.

The *prima facie* facts with which they would start are indeed so striking as to constitute at least a challenge to the normal economic system. It is true that several factors contributed to the results; the work of women and others not formerly engaged in production, the cessation of many forms of capital construction and of saving for increased investment abroad, etc. An unbiassed professional inquiry would assign full weight to these and other factors, but would probably find much still to the credit of the new methods of organisation.

The success of these methods under the conditions of the war is indeed beyond reasonable dispute. At a moderate estimate and allowing for the production of persons who were idle before the war, between half and two-thirds of the productive capacity of the country was withdrawn into combatant or other war service. And yet throughout the war Great Britain sustained the whole of her military effort and main-

tained her civilian population at a standard of life which was never intolerably low, and for some periods and for some classes was perhaps as comfortable as in time of peace. She did this without, on balance, drawing any aid from other countries. She imported, on borrowed money, less from America than she supplied, on loaned money, to her Allies. She therefore maintained the whole of the current consumption both of her war effort and of her civilian population with a mere remnant of her productive power by means of current production. The only exception to this general statement is the extent to which she used up existing capital ; and she only did this in so far as foreign securities were sold and the net real capital of the country deteriorated (in the form of unrepaired and unrenewed houses, roads, railways, etc.) to a value exceeding any gain through new capital and plant constructed in the war and still remaining useful after it. The loans she raised from her people are, of course, no deduction from this general statement, as internal loans merely represent a method of taxation and not a method of doing what is essentially impossible, that is, making the production of a later age available for the consumption of the present. The general and amazing fact therefore remains, without essential qualification, that with more than half her productive capacity withdrawn, Great Britain met the scarcely diminished necessities of her civilian population by current production.

### *Peace and War Economics*

We are now in a period which, in the relative importance of our objectives, and therefore in the character of the economic methods which are needed, is more like a period of war than one of peace. For such a period a controlled system has the great advantages which we found in the last war. Germany enjoys these advantages. We do not.

The free system of course has its own distinctive merits. For the ordinary purposes of peace it offers the individual, as consumer and as a worker, a much freer choice in his purchases and in his occupation. It encourages initiative

and develops all the personal qualities which fit men for willing co-operation with the State, as distinct from enforced service to it. These are great advantages ; but they are essentially peacetime advantages, and so far as they may help a war effort they do so only in the long run. A country which has long been under a free system is likely to have greater potential resources to draw upon. But, in the short run, there can be no doubt that a centralised State has a great advantage in the rapidity and completeness with which its resources can be utilised for a war effort. We should, I believe, do well to consider the immediate introduction of much of our war system and the preparation of a detailed plan to introduce the rest at once in case of war. Our own policy will, however, be discussed later. We are now concerned with the strength of the German position.

### *The German System and Foreign Trade*

We must now consider the other side of Germany's system, that which concerns her foreign trade. In this sphere money does set a definite limit, as it does not in the internal economy. The man-power and materials which are in the political control of a State can in one way or other be bought with the State's service ; money is, as far as they are concerned, only a useful instrument furnished by the State itself. But services and materials outside the physical control of the State cannot be so obtained. They must be bought from a willing seller, in return for a money which he regards as acceptable. This means that, to the extent to which a State needs goods from regions outside its own control, it must either use any stores of foreign exchange in its hands, or get new supplies by selling exports or by borrowing from abroad.

Germany, like all other countries, needs to import from abroad. She is indeed more nearly self-sufficient than we are, but she is less so than either Russia or the



U.S.A. She requires to import in particular a part of her food supplies, fats of all kinds, some metals and minerals, rubber and oil, the last of these being in some respects the most essential. She is handicapped in her efforts to export enough to earn the required foreign exchange by her rearmament effort, which diverts men and plant from the manufacture of exportable goods while increasing the need for imported raw materials ; by the adverse reactions of other countries to her control system which restricts the payments for foreign goods except in blocked marks ; and by the unwillingness to buy German goods which results from indignation at German aggression or pogroms.

The German system meets this difficulty in several ways. In the first place it includes a complete control of foreign exchange, a method which indirectly reduces the foreign exchange obtainable but enables what there is to be directed exclusively to those purchases which are most required by the German armament policy. In the next place, through a system of "clearings" and barter arrangements too intricate to be now described, it utilises the full consumers' demand of Germany as a bargaining instrument in negotiating agreements with countries to whom the sale in block of a large proportion of their total production of agricultural commodities and raw materials is very attractive. True, they are in return given only a mark credit which cannot be used except for purchases from Germany. This is irksome, — the appetite for mouth-organs and aspirin in South-Eastern Europe is more than sated — and free exchange would be greatly preferred. But the range of choice is after all a fairly wide one, and the inducements offered very great. To Germany bargains of this kind have a political and military as well as an economic advantage. Influential persons in the countries concerned have their interests involved with Germany ; and much of what is supplied from Germany is in the form of armaments, for which replacements,

ammunition and spare parts are not readily obtainable elsewhere. In the third place, the German control system enables competitors to be broken successively and in detail, by subsidising or giving preference in respect of exchange and imported raw materials to particular industries, a device which may be expensive at the time but profitable in the end if it results in the permanent capture of a market. This method can be applied where the various forms of barter transaction are inapplicable or insufficient ; and one of the dangers we may have to fear is an intensive drive at our world markets with the aid of this form of State assistance ; a danger which our dispersed exporters, if they do not secure an effective common organisation or State assistance, would certainly find it difficult to meet.

These methods have not sufficed to meet the strain caused by German armaments, and in some respects they add to the difficulties. The grievance, for example, as to raw materials which are in almost all cases sold on equal terms to all comers, arises from the fact that it is much harder for a German importer to find pounds, francs and dollars than marks ; and he is easily persuaded that what is needed is German colonies producing raw materials which would be sold in terms of marks. Other methods, outside the system of financial control, have therefore been adopted. Vienna and Prague both afforded useful stores of foreign exchange. This, however, was not enough, for it was a windfall to be expended once and not renewable. The trade agreement with Rumania might offer more enduring advantages if it ensured (without the expenditure of foreign exchange) a substantial supplement both of wheat and, above all, of oil. In a transaction of this kind, the distinction we have drawn between the rôle of finance in internal and external economy breaks down. For the trade agreement was obviously obtained not only, or mainly, by economic inducements ; political pressure was a real factor. To that extent Rumania might be

partly, as Austria and Czechoslovakia have been completely, assimilated to Germany's internal economy.

We must consider these methods in conjunction with the fact that Germany has been for several years engaged in reducing her dependence upon imports by the use of substitutes. She uses an amalgam of other materials for rubber, wood-fibre for woollen cloth, oil from coal for imported oil, nitrogen from the air for Chilean nitrates, and so on.

The German control system as such has less advantages in regard to external trade than in exploiting internal resources ; and countries with a free system, with the aid of a State-assisted organisation which would modify it without changing its essential character, could probably maintain their position. For the Germany of a few years ago dependence upon external imports was the point of greatest weakness, both in a period of war preparations through a lack of foreign exchange, and in a period of war through the additional operation of blockade. In both cases the weakness remains, but its importance has been reduced. A country which has limited its need for imports by substitutes, and can add military to economic inducements for the provision of whatever the central and south-eastern part of Europe can produce, is to a considerable extent immune to the consequences of restriction of supplies from elsewhere.

In such a system there are of course inherent, or potential, weaknesses. Discontent and resentment in Germany, or in the new countries she has either added to the Reich or reduced to subservience, may express itself either in war, or perhaps, if war is long postponed, in peace, in various forms which will weaken the military effort. Even without political upheaval or overt resistance there may be a slackening of work, a contagious and ultimately widespread form of passive and partial strike. Or disastrous errors in administrative policy may, without the curative processes of public criticism, be both

perpetuated and extended. Or, in time, initiative, inventiveness and all the qualities upon which progress and efficiency depend, may be sapped and destroyed by the repressions of the régime.

These are possibilities, but possibilities only. They must not disguise from us the fact that, so long as the system remains strong and efficient, and any internal resistances are of negligible effect, it has great advantages, especially in the short run, for the mobilisation of effort for war purposes.

In a word, Germany's system, in comparison with our own, has all the advantages and disadvantages of a war system. What she has done is to institute a war control, to develop a skilful technique in its management, and to utilise it for war preparations. She has fully developed her resources for this purpose; we have a large margin not yet so developed. We could institute a similar system, as we did in the last war, and should doubtless do more quickly in another war. From the moment we started we should, apart from the factor of interruption from the air, be greatly increasing our output with every month, while Germany would be incapable of a similar increase. For the same reason, however, the advantage she would have obtained by having piled up large reserves, and having her industrial organisation developed to full capacity before the outbreak of the war, would give her an initial advantage.

It is an advantage which we cannot afford. And we must return therefore to the conclusion already suggested earlier in this chapter. Politically, and economically, we are in a period which is more like one of war than one of normal peace. We need to adopt at once many of the methods, such as those described in Part III of this book, by which we immensely increased our production in the last war — and we can do so again.

## CHAPTER VI

### STRATEGY AND STRENGTH

WE have discussed the principal political ideas and some of the material factors which will determine the rôle of Great Britain, Germany and the United States of America in the ensuing years ; and an analysis of the underlying political motives of France, Italy, Russia and Japan will be found later.

We must now look at the general strategic and political position in Europe in closer relation to a possibly imminent general war. What is likely to be the force available on each side, and what are the main strategic and political factors involved ?

This is a difficult task, because an exact appreciation would require access to much information which is secret, and the expert knowledge needed to assess the relative importance of different instruments of warfare. In relation to a particular crisis such special information and access to expert advice is important, and may be essential, for a sound decision upon policy. For this reason the prudent critic of action taken in such a situation as that of last September will bear in mind that a Government has relevant information of which he is ignorant, and will allow a certain margin for this factor before he confidently pronounces a verdict on its decision.

For the purpose, however, of forming a judgement upon the broad outline of policy this disability is less serious. A great deal of information is, after all, available, and a lay student who takes the trouble to learn what can be known from public sources, to read what military experts have written, and to use his common sense, may be reasonably confident that he can form an opinion as to the main

line of policy to be pursued, which would not be changed by the secret information and expert advice available to the Government. In some respects, indeed, he has an advantage over those who have in their minds a great mass of technical detail about different armed forces. Military information tends to be precise, but incomplete in patches. It is liable to prevent sufficient weight being given to imponderables. The "statisticians' fallacy" is to ignore, or give inadequate weight to, whatever cannot be stated in precise figures ; and since such factors are often as important as those upon which precise information is available, the resulting judgement is often disastrously wrong. Military information and advice are often subject to a somewhat similar fallacy. The expert will perhaps know the exact number of divisions available to a particular Government ; and the very exactness of his knowledge of this kind will make it more difficult for him, or for those whom he advises, to allow sufficiently for the political factors which may, in alternative circumstances, change the policy for which that Government would use its forces or the determination of the people in supporting its Government through a war. Every form of expert knowledge brings its own bias, which tends to distort the judgement on any situation in which other factors, outside the scope of the expert, are involved.

In any case, ordinary citizens must attempt an estimate, since their opinions may in the last resort determine the policy of Governments, and they must, in any case, suffer the consequences. For the formation of these opinions it is as important to know what can be done as what we should like to be done.

The best help that a writer of such a book as this can give is to set out as fairly and objectively as is possible the main factors that need to be taken into account.

In the survey which follows there will be no technical detail and few or no specific pieces of military information, partly because of the limits of the writer's own knowledge,

partly because there are of course many facts which it would be inexpedient to publish, and partly because the general picture can be better and more truly seen if it is painted broadly and boldly without meticulous detail.

Let us catalogue the main factors in the account, and then let each of us try to arrive at a dispassionate judgement, unbiased by wishes or hopes or panic fears.

### *Armies and Armaments*

Every country has an actual and a potential military strength. The actual strength is the striking power of its armed forces at any particular moment ; as most nations wrap up their military establishment in as much secrecy as they can preserve, and as the details of personnel and equipment are constantly changing, it is very hard to reach a satisfactory estimate of this. The potential strength is easier to calculate because it depends on facts and figures which are generally available and are not subject to radical changes. The potential strength is a norm to which any nation tends to approximate when it is at war, because it then strives to make the most of all its resources of man-power and industry ; the actual strength in peace time varies widely in relation to the potential strength, because some nations are so much more determined than others to achieve military power. Actual strength is what counts, therefore, at the beginning of a war, but potential strength comes more and more into force with each month that the struggle continues.

Although, however, the information needed to assess a country's " potential " strength is available, anything like an exact and scientific appreciation would, of course, need a much more elaborate study than is now possible. All we can now seek is some method of giving a very rough-and-ready estimate of the ultimate resources of the different countries which will help us in forming a general conception of the meaning of the present grouping of forces.

While any simple criterion is open to obvious objections, some indication, sufficient for our present purpose, is afforded by putting together the figures of each country's population and those of its crude steel production. In relation to an actual war, such factors as the liability of a country to be shut off from some essential ingredients required for its industrial processes are important, and we shall take account of such factors later. But we are, for the moment, concerned only to get a general idea of the ultimate potential strength of the different countries, and the criterion may serve for this. Population figures indicate the man-power available for service whether in the armed forces or the rear ; and crude steel production, if we bear in mind the qualifications mentioned, give some idea of a country's capacity to sustain a war effort with its own armaments and munitions as well as being a fair index of its all-round industrial strength. A country may, of course, have a vast man-power with a very low industrial capacity — China and India provide the extreme examples ; or, on the contrary, a very highly industrialised state may be quite insignificant in size and population — such as Luxembourg, which has a larger crude steel production than Italy. By combining the two criteria the orders of strength they produce are corrected, and new ratios emerge — incapable of being rendered statistically, because the quantities are incommensurable, but nevertheless highly significant for the political observer. In the table on the next page both orders are given and the steel production figure for the U.S.A. is added for purposes of comparison.

The figures of population are only for Europe and do not include either the figure for the Soviet Union in Asia (54 millions) or for the overseas Dominions and colonial territories of Britain, France and Italy. In the case of the Soviet Union the distinction of European and Asiatic territories is not important, but with the overseas empires the matter is somewhat different, for the latter



are not only separated by spaces of sea from the metropolitan countries, but are to a great extent lands of alien race, such as India and the European colonies of North and Central Africa ; special difficulties arise, therefore, if they are counted in for man-power calculations, but they must somehow be brought into the picture.

Even if we consider population only for Europe, a distinction must be drawn between State and nationality figures. Since Eire has become a separate political unit, State and nationality are virtually identical for Britain,

Country	Population in Europe (in millions)	Country	Crude Steel Production in 1937 (in million metric tons)
1. U.S.S.R. .	108·1	1. Germany and Austria .	20·5
2. Germany .	90·0 *	2. U.S.S.R. .	17·8
3. Great Britain .	44·5	3. Great Britain .	13·2
4. Italy .	43·6	4. France .	7·9
5. France .	42·0	5. Italy .	2·1
6. Poland .	32·2	6. Poland .	1·5
		Czechoslovakia .	2·3†
		U.S.A. .	51·4

\* Approximate ; including Czechoslovakian protectorates.

† The iron and steel plant of the former Czechoslovakia has now been divided between Germany and Poland, the latter getting about a third of it by her acquisition of the Teschen area.

France and Italy. They were also for Germany before 1938, and continued to be so approximately after the annexations of Austria and the Sudetenland, but with the incorporation of 10 million Czechs and Slovaks the German Reich has ceased to be a uni-national State. The industrial equipment and to a great extent the labour power of Czechoslovakia must now be considered as belonging to Germany ; but the increase of population does not mean a corresponding increase of military man-power, for the vast majority of Czechs undoubtedly remain at heart enemies of Germany and they are apparently not to be conscripted for the German Army — it would be too dangerous. At the same time the use of

their industrial resources will enable a larger proportion of the manhood of Germany to be withdrawn from industrial work and placed in the Army. In Poland the Poles are only a majority of the inhabitants over about two-thirds of the country, and the six million Ukrainians cannot be counted as an integral part of the Polish nation. In the Soviet Union the position is rather different, as here we have a State which is avowedly a federation of nationalities and not identified with any one of them. But since the Soviet Union is to all intents and purposes not a federal, but a unitary state, and since it tends to become more and more Russian instead of "international", the question of nationalities remains important. The Great Russians make up a little over half of the total population, and all the Russians, including Ukrainians and Byelorussians, just over three-quarters.

The man-power factor is further conditioned by the system of military service adopted. All the continental Powers mentioned have conscript armies with large reserves available on mobilisation. Germany, however, has only been building up her forces on a basis of conscription for the last four years; from 1919 to 1935 she was forbidden to conscript and restricted to a small long-service professional army by the terms of Versailles. The change back to conscription has involved a great strain on the military organisation, and there is still a deficiency of trained reserves — an appreciable factor of weakness in Germany's military position.

Britain, in contrast to the continental Powers, has retained the voluntary system, and this means that even if she were to adopt conscription immediately on the outbreak of a European war, she could not in the first six months of it put into the field numbers of men at all commensurate with her total man-power. In the last war she had time to raise and train fresh armies after sending the original Expeditionary Force to France, but this was conditional on the successful resistance of France and

Russia. Reliance on the raising of armies after war has begun is a dangerous procedure, for a war may be decided in its first stage, as were the campaigns of 1866 and 1870, and as that of 1914 might have been if the Schlieffen Plan had been successfully carried through. And Britain's reluctance to adopt conscription has been a very important factor impeding the arrangement of collective defence in Europe, because France and other nations find it hard to believe that she is completely in earnest as long as she holds on to the voluntary system, and they would naturally prefer not to have to assume the responsibility of bearing the initial shock of war with all their mobilised forces while the British are learning to become soldiers. There is much to be said on the other side ; the continental staffs tend to pay too much attention to mere numbers of infantry and to underestimate the contribution Britain might make with her Navy and Air Force. Nevertheless, in so far as there is a possibility of a " lightning war " and the burden of war is primarily a matter of human casualties (which are sustained numerically most of all by the infantry), the French impatience can be understood. Britain's lack of immediately mobilisable reserves is both a military and a political factor of great importance.

Turning from man-power to the material means of war, we find that on the basis of crude steel production the six Powers fall into the order : Germany, Russia, Britain, France, Italy, Poland. It is well to remember in this connection that the total production of Germany, Russia and Britain together only just surpasses that of the U.S.A. But here the question of utilisation enters in. A large heavy industry capacity is essential for great strength in armaments, but does not automatically produce it, nor can a complex mechanism of production for civil purposes be switched over to arms output overnight. Granted an equal start in heavy industry, one country can gain a long lead over another by concentrating on arms production and organising all its resources under central direction for

that end. On the 1937 figures quoted in the table above, Germany and Italy together have a slight superiority in steel production over Britain and France together, but only produce a third of the total of Britain, France and the U.S.A. If therefore the three great democracies were to hold together and prefer guns to butter to the same extent as Germany, they could have a very great superiority in armaments over the Axis Powers, even without the addition of Russia, whose steel production is more than three times that of the third Anti-Comintern partner, Japan. The advantages in armaments which have accrued to the Axis Powers from dictatorial controls over industry and the essentially temporary nature of their lead over the democracies have already been discussed in the last chapter.

Steel is not, of course, the only element in arms potential, but it is probably the most significant single measure of a country's economic capacity for waging *la guerre totale*. Men at war have many other needs besides guns, shells and tanks: a sufficiency of food to eat; oil for motors; clothing, boots and medical supplies. But the recent campaigns in Aragon and Catalonia — the most serious pitched battles since 1918 — have shown that sheer "weight of metal" is more, rather than less, decisive than it was twenty-one years ago. In an age of mechanised industry the big batteries count for more than the big battalions. The ability to produce armaments and munitions on the largest scale is, therefore, the crucial test of ultimate (not necessarily of immediate) military power, and by this criterion the U.S.A., Germany, the Soviet Union and Great Britain must be reckoned the Big Four of the contemporary world.

### *The Strategic Situation*

Men and arms are two of the three main factors in warfare; the third is geographical position. This involves

various considerations — the length of front ; the distance of objectives ; above all, the length and security of communications. On these counts it has to be admitted that Britain and France are to-day confronted with what is in several respects a difficult situation.

As long as Italy and Germany stand together they hold a very strong central position between Western and Eastern Europe with territory continuous from Schleswig to Sicily, from the North Sea and the Baltic in the north to the Mediterranean in the south. They can bar any access by land from France to Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania or Russia, and, more than this, they can endanger the main sea routes to Eastern Europe from the Atlantic and the Western Mediterranean. To the north Germany lies close to the narrow waters at the entrance to the Baltic ; to the south Italian aircraft and naval raiders based on Sicily, Libya, and the newly fortified island of Pantellaria can threaten all maritime traffic between the two halves of the Mediterranean. There are also the Italian bases in the Dodecanese, which menace entry to the Aegean and to the Black Sea beyond.

As against these facts must be set the hazardous dispersion of the Italian Empire, which depends on maritime communications. As long as Egypt and the Suez Canal are not under her control, Italy cannot succour her forces in East Africa and, as long as a strong British fleet is in being at Malta, she is cut off from Libya and the Dodecanese. Thus, even if Italy were able to render the Mediterranean virtually impassable to the cargo ships or transports of her enemies, she would herself be exposed to great dangers in the event of a European war, and to a greater degree than Germany. Even if the Axis were to be victorious on land, Italy might yet lose all her overseas possessions if British sea-power remained unbroken. Italian East Africa, Libya and the Dodecanese would all be isolated as long as the Axis lacked command of the sea, and would have to carry on as independent

bases ; in a short struggle their offensive value would far outweigh their vulnerability, but in a long war they would exhaust their magazines and almost certainly become a total loss.

### *Spain*

Spain is a further factor which has to be taken into consideration. Whether or not she is an actual belligerent in a European war, she holds strategically a key position and her attitude is of very great importance. Reports of the attitude of Franco's Spain since the fall of Madrid have not so far been encouraging, and we must face the prospect of a period of Spanish hostility, even if the country may be expected to remain formally neutral in a crisis. Now that wars are no longer expressly declared, but simply waged, the border-line between war and peace has become very indistinct, and a hostile neutral may be only less dangerous than an open enemy. In the last war the pro-German elements in Spain gave clandestine aid to the side they favoured ; Majorca was the chief refueling base for German submarines in the Mediterranean. In a new war it must be anticipated that Spanish bases may be made secretly available not only for submarines but also for raiding aircraft ; such aid would of course be denied by the Spanish Government and could only be stopped by active operations against Spain, which would put the British and French into the rôle of invaders and tend to rally the Spanish people against them. Yet the danger to British and French communications from even a small force of enemy submarines and aircraft would be very great. The entry into the Mediterranean by the Straits of Gibraltar and the sea crossing from Algeria to France would be directly menaced ; from Galicia and the Canaries all shipping routes to Britain and France from the south could be attacked far out in the Atlantic ; and from the Basque province and Navarre the southwestern quarter of France — the most remote from the

German and Italian frontiers — could be visited by aeroplanes “of unknown origin”. Spain would, of course, be separated from the Axis, no less than the Italian colonies, by British sea-power, but its intrinsic size and strength would make it far less vulnerable in isolation.

The result of the Spanish civil war has been in fact indirectly an important factor in making it impossible for Britain and France to disinterest themselves in Eastern Europe. There has been a school of thought in both countries, with M. Flandin as its most definite exponent, which has advocated the policy of “letting Germany go east”, of scrapping France’s East European alliances and the general obligations of the League Covenant, and of withdrawing behind the barriers of the Maginot Line and the British Navy while Germany pursued her destined path to Ukraine, sating her appetite for conquest and — it may be — breaking some of her teeth. Such a course was clearly a repudiation of the ideal of collective security and a return to power politics and “compensation” diplomacy of the old type; but, assuming that collective security was to be abandoned, the new policy had still to be judged by “realist” canons of national safety. There was always the risk that Germany, having conquered some and neutralised others of the countries of Eastern Europe, would turn back against France with an overwhelming power.

If under such conditions France and Britain were nevertheless to put their trust in the “defence of the West”, it was of the utmost importance that Spain should be friendly. With a hostile Spain the risk became too great. Yet, paradoxically enough, those who were most inclined to “let Germany go east” were also those who most strongly favoured the cause of Franco in the Spanish civil war and were ready to overlook the armed intervention of the Axis Powers on Spanish soil. As things are now, France and Britain are unable, even if they would,

to disinterest themselves in Eastern Europe. The Anglo-Polish alliance was in this sense a sequel to the surrender of Madrid.

### *The Methods of Mutual Aid*

In the new situation, if France is threatened with an attack in the rear, Germany must face the prospect of another war on two fronts. On the assumption that Germany strikes either east or west and that the alliances are brought into operation, the task of the partners not directly attacked is to give help to those who are. There are, therefore, two forms of the strategic problem for us to consider : (1) What military aid could France and Britain give to a victim of aggression in Eastern Europe ? and (2) What help could France and Britain expect *from* Eastern Europe if they were themselves attacked ?

In the first case Anglo-French aid could be given in five ways : (1) naval blockade ; (2) military attack on the Siegfried Line ; (3) air attack ; (4) supplement to East European munitions supplies via Murmansk ; (5) operations in the Near East based on Palestine and Cyprus and ultimately on India and South Africa.

It is obvious that there are serious difficulties within the strategic limits thus indicated. Naval blockade, which we shall consider separately, is essentially a process of attrition, and could not have immediate effects. Attack on the Siegfried Line would engage large German forces, but it would be a most formidable enterprise, not merely because of the strength of the fortifications, but equally because of the shortness of the front. In this respect Britain and France would be put at a military disadvantage by their political principles, for, whereas Nazi Germany would probably not scruple to enlarge her front for an invasion of France by drives through Switzerland, Belgium or Holland, the neutrality of these countries would be very valuable for a German western front designed merely to cover offensives in the east, and it is



out of the question that either Britain or France would ever violate it. If Italy were in the war, another front would be open for military decisions, but it is a mountain barrier not easy to pass, and a landing in force on the Italian coast would be hazardous in the extreme. Air attacks on Germany and Italy would be an important factor, but hardly a decisive one — at least at the outset. Air power can only win a war apart from a military decision if the one side has an overwhelmingly superior air force, or if the other side has grossly neglected its anti-aircraft defences ; neither condition is likely to be fulfilled in the case under discussion.

For the reasons already given, the prospects of effective Anglo-French operations (other than naval) in the region of the Mediterranean east of Sicily are much less favourable than they were in the last war. Warships will probably be able to pass to and fro, but the risk for transports and cargo boats may prove to be excessive. Whatever operations are undertaken, therefore, may have to be carried on, partly by naval units and partly by land forces not based on Western Europe. Such campaigns would involve a number of very complicated problems, both strategic and political, which cannot be considered here ; but it may perhaps be said in summary that it would be unwise to expect a decisive result from them.

### *East European Allies*

It follows from the above sketch of the situation that a very great deal would depend on the capacity of any East European allies we have to hold out in their own defence until Germany should begin to feel the effects of economic attrition. The war effort of the Western democracies would be of the greatest value to an East European State attacked by Germany as long as that State was putting up an effective resistance, but would have little chance of reversing the decision if once that resistance collapsed.

Apart from the Soviet Union the three nations which have the best hope of making a successful resistance to the Axis are Poland, Rumania and Turkey — the first because of her inherent strength approaching that of a Great Power, the second because the Carpathians are a reserve line of defence, and the third because of her geographical position. These three nations with Russia in support should be able to oppose a real barrier to the march of German power, and it will doubtless be the aim of our diplomacy to obtain the maximum of co-operation of these three with each other, with ourselves, and with Russia.

Greece, to which a British guarantee has now been given, is in itself far weaker than Poland, Rumania or Turkey, but to a greater degree than any of those three countries it can be protected by British sea-power. Without an Anglo-French naval guarantee Greece would be entirely at the mercy of Italy, but with it she can hope to ensure the survival of her independence in the Morea and the Aegean Islands even if Macedonia and Thessaly were lost to invading armies. For a successful military defence of the latter, in view of the difficulty of sending Anglo-French expeditionary forces through the Mediterranean, the Greeks would have to be reinforced by Turkish or Russian troops.

If we now turn to the other main problem and ask what help could be given by East European allies if France or the Low Countries were attacked, the answer must be given mainly in terms of land blockade. If Russia, Poland and Rumania withhold from Germany their grain, their ores and their oil, that by itself would be a service of inestimable value. For the danger of "letting Germany go east" lay in the prospect that the East European countries, abandoned by France and Britain, would make their terms with an all-conquering Germany, providing her with all the resources she needed for a later onslaught on the West. If the Eastern nations are enabled by the Western to retain their independence, they in turn can

aid the West by restricting Germany's control of economic resources.

### *Poland and Russia*

We should not, on the other hand, expect too much by way of military intervention as long as Poland is unwilling to give passage to Russian armies. The Poles would certainly put up a very strong resistance to a German invasion of their country, but it is not likely that they would be able to carry out a successful invasion of Germany. If the whole weight of the Soviet Red Army were thrown into the scale, the situation would be very different. The political factors which may determine the relations between Russia and Poland are discussed in the next chapter.

But we should not, because of our perception of the obstacles to full military co-operation between the two countries, fall into the opposite error of disparaging the value of East European "commitments" to ourselves. If we are disposed to do that, we have only to imagine a Germany controlling everything eastward to the Black Sea or even to the Volga in order to realise the situation we might then be in.

### *Outside Europe*

We have so far considered only the situation in Europe. Outside Europe there are, of course, two Great Powers whose possible intervention, direct or indirect, in a European conflict, must enter into all estimates of international politics. We have already alluded to the enormous potential strength of the U.S.A. as indicated by the figures of its steel production, and the political factors at work there have been discussed in Chapter IV. The question as regards the U.S.A. is whether and to what extent she would be likely to intervene on the side of the European democracies in a struggle against the Axis Powers; we can be sure that she would not in any case

fight on their side. Japan, on the other hand, is a partner with Germany and Italy in the Anti-Comintern Pact, and the question here is whether she would actually make war as their ally in the event of a European catastrophe or remain neutral *vis-à-vis* Britain, France and Russia while continuing her endeavour to conquer China. All the three non-Axis Powers have territories in the Far East which are remote from their centres of power and are exposed to Japanese attack ; in danger also are the Dutch East Indies, whose fate is a matter of the greatest concern both to Britain herself and to the Dominion of Australia. If it were simply a matter of dealing with the European Powers, Japan might be expected to take the opportunity to attack and seize for her new empire Hong Kong, French Indo-China and Borneo. There is, however, one factor which may keep Japanese aggression within limits, and that is the new trend of policy in the U.S.A. Japan is suffering a severe economic strain from her war in China, and her commerce with America is too essential to her economy to be lightly endangered ; moreover the Japanese Admiralty is aware that the Singapore naval base, now completed, could be used by an American fleet, even if Britain could not spare battleships for Far Eastern waters. A certain caution is therefore visible in Japanese policy as regards commitments to the Axis. But the danger of a simultaneous attack on the British Empire, with the U.S.A. still hesitating to emerge completely from isolationism, is a grave possibility which must always be in the minds of those who are responsible for our national defence.

### *Sea-power and Blockade*

The military policy of the Nazis is founded on the belief (fundamentally a true one) that the last war was decided by the British naval blockade and that the new German *Wehrmacht* must be based on economic autarky. Whereas in 1914 the effect of blockade was discounted by

the German General Staff and a real war economy only introduced at a later stage, this time great efforts have been made to organise such a system as a preliminary to any war challenge.

A blockade is, in any case, a long-term war method, and cannot be effective at the outset of a struggle. But any nation which goes to war must be prepared for a prolonged trial of strength, if it fails to obtain an early decision and is unwilling to end the war on terms its enemies will accept. The very knowledge that it relies on a rapid victory and cannot retain its vigour for more than a certain period of time will be a source of courage and confidence to its foes. Germany has sought, therefore, to build up a maximum immunity to blockade by systematic peace-time measures. These are of two kinds : *ersatz* production and storage. The former is the production of substitutes for commodities which would normally have to be imported from abroad ; the latter is the creation of reserves of raw materials by accumulation in time of peace. Both procedures are contrary to the rules of a free economic system ; for the one means manufacturing goods at a cost too high for a competitive price, and the other means purchasing great quantities of commodities for which there is no immediate demand. But if national power is the objective, it is not less economic to spend money on producing synthetic rubber at more than the world price for natural rubber, or on laying in stocks of nickel, tungsten or manganese, than it is to put it into guns, aeroplanes or battleships. All these forms of expenditure are equally unproductive from the point of view of "welfare economics", but all are equally necessary for the capacity to wage war, if a country is liable to be blockaded. There can be no doubt but that a considerable part of Germany's "rearmament" expenditure has gone, not into actual instruments of war, but into plant for *ersatz* production or into purchases of all kinds of imported materials — and foodstuffs — for purposes of storage.

By these devices Germany has undoubtedly reduced

her vulnerability to blockade. But it must be remembered that in two ways Germany was tending to be more vulnerable than in 1914-18, for in the first place she had lost the iron ores of Lorraine, which she possessed in 1914, and in the second, the greater importance for war of the internal combustion engine (for aeroplane, tanks, and motor transport) increased the need for oil supplies which Germany lacked within her own borders.

Even with the drastic measures taken by the Nazi régime to ensure self-sufficiency, Germany would be hard put to it to keep up adequate supplies of iron ore and oil in a war of long duration. German iron-ore production has been raised by the working of low-grade deposits which would not be touched for commercial purposes, but large imports are still necessary. They come mainly from Spain and Sweden. In a war with Britain the Spanish supplies would be cut off, and Sweden would be the only considerable source. Sweden might continue the supply, and legitimately, as a neutral; but her sympathies might also lead her to withhold it if she were sure of being adequately assisted against German reprisals by the nations opposing the Axis. In any case, utilisation of scrap and severe cutting-down of all non-military uses of iron and steel would enable Germany to carry on for some time.

The problem of oil is somewhat different. Nobody has yet discovered a synthetic iron ore, but petrol can be produced from coal, and the Germans have been at great pains to set up plant for the purpose, so as to render themselves independent of supplies from abroad. The process, however, is very wasteful of coal — it has been estimated that to produce a year's war-time oil supply would use up half Germany's present annual coal production — and coal production cannot be greatly expanded without the training of new miners — which is much harder than the training of soldiers. But a considerable expansion has

been achieved by the incorporation of Czechoslovakia with its coal mines and miners ; the supplementary coal supply is perhaps the greatest benefit Germany has obtained from the conquest. With enlarged coal resources and completed extraction plant, it is perhaps not quite certain that Germany would have to capitulate in a long war because of an oil famine. On the other hand, her need to produce oil by this costly and cumbrous method would be a severe handicap to her forces in contest with nations which could draw on the great natural oilfields of the United States, Venezuela, the Caucasus and Iraq. It would therefore make a great deal of difference to her whether she could, or could not, draw upon the important oil production of Rumania.

As regards food also, Germany is still in a weak position. The determining factor in food supply for a country at war is not only the capacity of the soil and the extent to which it requires imported fertilisers, but also the amount of labour and equipment available for agriculture ; and the inevitably large withdrawals of men, motors and horses from the land cannot fail to bring about a decline of the peace-time production, which must be made up either by purchases or from stores. A year ago Germany was dependent on foreign food imports to about 20 per cent of her requirements, and needs also to import fertilisers. With the annexation of Bohemia and Slovakia her position is rather better, and large stocks of soya bean have recently been laid in for storage by purchase from Manchukuo. The grain surplus of Hungary would probably be available in the event of war. Yet Germany with Austria-Hungary held in 1914-18 more food-producing territory than she now controls, and yet suffered from food shortage ; nor does it seem likely, from such information as is available, that either State-promoted cultivation of marginal land or food storage have been sufficient to remedy the deficiency, if the Axis Powers had to wage war over a long period. A German military expert,

writing in an official publication of the War Office,<sup>1</sup> laid it down that a State in Central Europe can only be self-sufficing under war conditions "if it already produces at least 40 per cent more foodstuffs than it actually requires to feed itself". But the Axis Powers, even with their dependent territories, are very far from this ideal, and siege conditions would certainly tell on them sooner or later.

The conclusion to be drawn from this brief survey is that the Western democracies, with their greater resources, their wider access to all kinds of supplies, and their naval blockade-power, can have every confidence in the issue of a long war, if a war is forced upon them, but that for these long-term factors to operate the democracies must be able to withstand the initial shocks of such a struggle. The Axis Powers will develop their maximum strength in the first six months of war ; to be able to survive that six months must be the constant preoccupation of Anglo-French defence preparations. We may recall for our reassurance that Germany in 1918 collapsed four years and three months after the outbreak of war, but we must also remember that in 1870 Napoleon III surrendered at Sedan only six weeks after the call to arms. The present German Government has given proofs enough of its capacity for sudden and ruthless action ; in the presence of such a menace all nations that value their liberty must be at all times ready for the heaviest blow. And the more ready they are, the less likely is it that the blow will, after all, be attempted.

<sup>1</sup> Major Beutler in *Kriegswirtschaftliche Jahresberichte*, 1936. Quoted by F. Sternberg, *Germany and a Lightning War*, p. 199.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE NEW GROUPING OF POWERS

WE have now considered briefly the main factors of power — soldiers, strategic position and economic potential — which enter into the purely military calculations of Governments and their advisers. There remains a field of political calculation which is no less important, but cannot be assessed by the same methods or expressed in similar terms. It covers all matters of sentiment and will, of motive and aim in national policies, and inevitably it overlaps the sphere of the military expert. The latter will declare what means nations have for fighting if they fight, but whether each one will fight, and, if it does, with what allies and with how strong a resolution are questions to be answered, in so far as they can be answered at all, from political experience. Attempts have been made in three previous chapters to explain the fundamental national attitudes which condition the policies of Germany, Britain and the United States respectively. In this chapter I will confine myself to a short general survey.

A coalition of States to resist aggression is founded on the desire of each one of them to retain its existing integrity and independence. It is an axiom that no nation wishes to lose its freedom and be subdued to the will of another ; all, therefore, have a common interest in defence against a Power which threatens a general domination. This is an older and more fundamental concern of Governments than that more generalised law against aggression embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations ; it applied to European States in the days of Napoleon as it applies to Europe to-day in the shadow of the swastika. Under a perfect and universal

collective security, such as the founders of the League hoped might one day be possible, an aggression of Paraguay against Bolivia is as much a violation of the law as an aggression of Germany against Czechoslovakia. But there is clearly a practical difference between the two cases. Any unchecked act of aggression will have an adverse effect on a collective security system and tend to reduce confidence in its value, but nobody supposes that Paraguay would ever be a menace to any nation outside a particular region of South America. Fear of a general continental, if not of a world-wide, domination is, on the other hand, likely to be aroused when a Great Power such as Germany goes on the war-path. The tendency of nations to combine against a threat of this kind is in keeping with the old doctrine of the balance of power ; it represents a narrower conception of international order than that of the League of Nations, but is at any rate not contrary to it, as are the avowed principles of Fascism.

The general desire of nations to safeguard their independence is, however, often counteracted by what may be called the will to neutrality. The latter is the result of the fear or dislike of war combined with the hope of being able to "keep out of it". If a country, A, attacks another country, B, a third country, C, may remain neutral, either because it does not feel endangered by A's action and sees no adequate reason for involving itself in war even though confident of its ability to achieve ultimate victory, or alternatively because it is by itself so weak and exposed to reprisals from A that it dare not take a stand on behalf of B unless it can be sure of very strong and *immediate* assistance from bigger Powers. The former type of neutrality has been characteristic of British and American policies in the last two decades, the latter of the attitudes of the smaller nations of Europe. Taking advantage of all these impulses to "keep out of it", the aggressive, expanding States have been able to deal with their victims one by one, always assuring third parties,

that no harm is intended towards *them* or their interests. But the method of piecemeal conquest, as it is extended, reduces the hopes of the would-be neutrals that they really will be able to keep out of trouble. Many people thought that Japan would be satisfied with the conquest of Manchuria, but now she is trying to subdue the whole of China ; some hoped that Germany would be content with Austria and the Sudetenland, but now she has gone on to take the whole of Bohemia and Slovakia. At the beginning the nations not directly attacked or injured are inclined to accept assurances of limited objective from a State taking aggressive action in a particular direction ; but as the drama unfolds and pledges are violated one after another, no nation can feel safe. It is from the growing sense of insecurity among peoples who did not formerly feel themselves endangered that the will to combine for checking aggression has gradually arisen.

In such circumstances, the emergence of powerful States from neutrality, under the spur of an increased anxiety, will tend at the same time to have the effect of encouraging to a stronger attitude those other and smaller neutrals who are afraid to follow their sympathies — or even, it may be, to defend their own independence — without adequate external support. Small nations which long for a stable international order, but dare not offend an aggressive Great Power on or near their frontiers, begin to take courage when they see other Great Powers bestirring themselves to put a stop to the former's conquering progress. A big nation which is prepared to make a stand for preserving the existing freedom of States against a marauder draws small nations to its side in proportion as it shows itself both resolute and able to render them assistance.

### *Irredentism*

There are still, however, certain other obstacles in the way of a combined resistance to a dominating Power.

There is first of all the fact — too often overlooked — that aggressive aims are not necessarily limited to very powerful States. Relatively weak States may have ambitions, whether for a national “irredenta” or for colonial territory, which in normal times they have neither been able to satisfy by means of negotiation nor have dared to pursue by force, and a breakdown of the established international order offers them tempting opportunities of self-aggrandisement. Such States tend to have a foot in each camp, for on the one hand they share in the desire of all States for independence and security against a general domination, but on the other they hope to draw profit from a subversion of the *status quo*. They are, therefore, drawn fairly easily into the orbit of a world-disturbing Great Power, such as Germany, yet they are not altogether happy in it.

The most obvious instance is provided by Hungary, whose constant will to obtain revision of the Treaty of Trianon has led her to connive at the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, but whose people are deeply apprehensive of the further implications of a German-controlled Mitteleuropa. A very similar play of diverging motives may be seen in the recent policies of two other States, which are in themselves powerful, but yet are much weaker than Germany; I refer to Italy and Poland. Both have made use of German support or collusion to further their own ends — the former in order to carry through her conquest of Abyssinia and intervention in Spain, the latter in order to take Teschen from Czechoslovakia. Both hoped to be able to combine a profitable expansion with maintenance of their existing interests and independence; Italy hoped to keep the frontier on the Brenner and to sustain the independence of Austria, Poland to retain the Corridor and Poznan, while taking up her gains elsewhere. But Germany is an alarming friend, and it is not easy to combine her patronage with national freedom. Poland, having acquired Teschen, recognised the danger-signal

when the Germans marched into Slovakia, and hastened to make her escape from the Nazi embrace. Italy remains as the junior partner of the Axis, yet it is known that many Italians in high places are uneasy at the position of their country. Even hatred of France, which has been perhaps the most enduring sentiment behind Italian foreign policy in the last two decades, cannot blind them to the sinister significance of German troops stationed on their soil. In a war against the Western democracies defeat would mean ruin for Italian Fascism, but even victory would be barren if the war involved — as it certainly would, if the struggle were at all prolonged — an ever-deepening dependence of Italy on Germany. Mussolini's greatest successes have been won by a policy of balancing between a resurgent Germany and the victors of Versailles ; it has been no part of his plan to subdue Europe to a German Empire with Italy as the chief vassal. Yet that might well be the result of an Axis victory in a European war.

All these considerations have to be kept in mind by those who are concerned with foreign policy, and in the situation which confronts us we must refrain from any reproaches or recriminations arising out of events now past. The past behaviour of the States mentioned above is here relevant only as evidence for estimating their future policies, and we have to remember that no one of them could really threaten the peace and liberties of the world if it were not for the mighty Power with which they are now aligned. We should not assume that either Italy, Hungary or Franco's Spain can be detached from Germany ; we shall do well to make all our preparations on the hypothesis that they will remain in the opposing camp. But if any of them should at any time show signs of breaking away, there should not from our side be any discouragement.

*Communism*

Apart from the pro-German inclinations of dissatisfied States there has been one other great obstacle to European co-operation for preventing a German domination. This has been the fear and dislike of Communism among the propertied classes all over Europe, and especially in the countries lying between Germany and Russia. This antagonism has made it very difficult to bring about a united front of the Western democracies, Soviet Russia and Poland, and it has been exploited to the full by the propaganda of the Nazis, who have seen in it an excellent means of sowing confusion in the ranks of their potential foes. They have assiduously spread the legend of themselves as the champions of European order against Bolshevism, and have done their best to instil the idea that if Germany ever does go to war, it can only be against the Soviet Union — a crusade for which all other nations should be grateful to Germany. The Nazis are certainly the enemies of Communism in the domestic politics of Germany, and in the event of an internal collapse of the Soviet Union, they would no doubt seize any opportunity which offered itself for acquisition of territory or economic resources. But the prospects of a successful adventure in the Ukraine are no longer what they were when *Mein Kampf* was written ; Russia to-day, after the intensive industrialisation of two Five-Year Plans, is a very formidable Power, with an exceptional defensive strength because of the vast size of the country and the remoteness of its vital centres from its frontiers. Germany's need is for rapid success, and whatever her original plans may have been, the growing strength of Russia is inducement to the Nazis to look for easier game elsewhere. The Anti-Comintern Pact no doubt expresses the anti-Communist sentiments of its signatories, but it does not prove their intention to devote themselves exclusively to the chastisement of Stalin ; the eye of faith can discern

Bolshevism in London as well as in Moscow, and the Comintern is found to be doing its fell work wherever the Third Reich has claims to advance or strategic purposes which must be accomplished. For a long time English Conservatives lent a willing ear to the story that Hitler had no aim but to destroy the dragon of Marxist world-revolution; but now that President Roosevelt, Mr. Winston Churchill and Catholic bishops have all been classified under the Bolshevik label, it has become clear to all but the most obtuse that the Nazi Reich threatens, not Russia alone, but every nation whom it can hope to subdue. With this greater clarity of vision has come an increased willingness to enter into friendly relations with Russia, and the new attitude has been made easier by a tardy realisation of the fact that the policy of the Soviet Government ever since 1927 has to a great extent been directed towards toning down rather than exciting revolutionary unrest in other countries, so as to avert the danger of an anti-Soviet coalition of capitalist States.

### *Russia and Poland*

There remains, however, the special difficulty of the suspicions of Russian policy entertained in countries contiguous with Russia, and particularly in Poland. The military consequences of this distrust have already been mentioned ; as long as Poland is unwilling to grant passage through her territory to Russian troops, Russia cannot intervene with full effect as an ally of the Western democracies. Poland refused passage last September when it was a question of Russian aid to the Czechs, and apparently she still refuses it now that it would be a reinforcement of her own self-defence. We must not forget Poland's historical experience, and her bitter memories of ill-treatment at Russia's hands. Her fear is of the Russians as such even more than of Bolshevism ; the Poles recognise that the Kremlin's zeal for international revolution

is no longer what it was, but many of them feel that Russian political methods are still too "Muscovite" for Poland to take the risk of admitting the Red Army within her borders. There are some who, if they were certain that Polish independence was in any case doomed, would prefer a German to a Russian protectorate.

We must, however, in reflecting upon the prospects of effective co-operation between Russia and Poland, take account of certain other considerations which are more encouraging. The first is that in case of actual invasion, and it may be at the moment when invasion seems inevitable, the national danger will modify the attitude of the Poles and make them welcome Russian forces. The second is that it is an important national interest of Russia that Poland should retain her independence and remain as a buffer State between herself and Germany. The strength of both these motives is increased by the knowledge in both countries of the limitations to the aid which Great Britain and France can give, in view of the strategic and geographical position, and the need therefore of further support if a successful German invasion is to be made impossible. Even if Russian forces do not at once enter, the supply of adequate aeroplanes and war material might enable Poland to resist. In actual war it may be expected that there would be Russian co-operation. What would seem most important at the moment is that the prospect of this should be so assured as to serve as a deterrent. Somewhat similar considerations to those just discussed in relation to Poland apply also to the prospects of Russian co-operation in case of an invasion of Rumania.

In estimating the political tendencies of Russia, as with other nations, we must take account of specific national interests. The Soviet Union, as a State, has not in general taken over the expansionist aims of the Tsardom, but it has had a special outlook on European affairs and a principle of foreign policy not unlike the British conception of the Balance of Power. The persisting purpose of Soviet



policy has been to avert either an anti-Soviet coalition or the hegemony of a single Power in Western Europe ; either a Four-Power Pact or a definite French or German supremacy was considered dangerous for Russia. As long as France with her ally Poland had a military ascendancy, Soviet policy was pro-German. Then, after Hitler's rise to power came the menace of a Four-Power Pact isolating Russia and giving the Nazis a free hand in the East ; Russia countered by entering the League of Nations and encouraging France and her allies to resist Germany. With the accentuation of conflict between the Axis and the Western democracies and the failure of the Munich appeasement, the danger of a Four-Power Pact has become remote, but there is now a new danger — that of a German hegemony. In so far as they are convinced of the reality of this danger, and especially in so far as countries contiguous with Russia are threatened with conquest by Germany, the Russians will certainly try to thwart the Nazi programme. We must remember, nevertheless, that Germany does not yet touch the frontiers of the Soviet Union at any point, and we must consider in our calculations not only whether Russia would be ready to intervene on a given issue but also how far she would carry that intervention.

As to Russia's strength, there can be no doubt but that it is very great, though opinions may differ considerably as to the capacity of the newly established industries to stand up to the strain of prolonged war conditions and as to the effects on efficiency and morale of the drastic "purges" of 1936-38. The army is numerically the biggest in Europe and is highly mechanised ; the air force is comparable to Germany's, at any rate for the initial stage of hostilities ; the industrial system is entirely at the disposal of the State, and military needs are, as in Germany, given priority over all others. There is still a certain weakness of communications, and the location of the principal centres of the armaments industry in the Urals,

where they are virtually immune from air attack, creates a difficult problem of supply to armies in the field on a big offensive campaign. But on an all-round view, and making every allowance for the exceptionally thick veil of secrecy in which Russia's military preparations are enveloped, we can safely repeat the dictum of a British diplomat in the days of the Triple Entente : <sup>1</sup> " Russia is a formidable Power and will become increasingly strong. Let us hope our relations with her will continue to be friendly."

<sup>1</sup> Minute by Sir Arthur Nicolson in *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, ed. Gooch and Temperley, vol. xi, No. 66.

### *Note to Part I*

THESE, then, are the principal factors, material and moral, which now constitute the peril and the prospect of the democracies. We shall each of us perhaps estimate differently the change in Great Britain's position with the passing of island immunity, the psychology of the German people, the future of American policy, the advantages of the Nazi economic system and the effect of the new grouping of the Powers, and may differ as to the net result. The conclusions which seem to the writer to follow—so far as the practical problems of attempting to restore a collective system, of increasing national defensive strength, of framing a constructive peace policy which will unite the democracies and moderate the will to aggression in the Axis countries—will be discussed in the subsequent Parts of this book.



PART II

COLLECTIVE SECURITY



## CHAPTER I

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

FOR two decades the League of Nations has been a crucible of political ideas for the greater part of the world. As a system of relations between States it has had two great rivals : on the one hand, the ideal of an international socialist commonwealth to be established through world revolution — the declared objective of the Comintern — and, on the other, the old conception of absolute national sovereignty, reasserted in its most uncompromising form by Fascism. From the beginning the League has had to contend with these opposing political forces, but for a while it seemed to prevail over both of them in its hold on the opinion and imagination of mankind.

We shall see later how each of the Great Powers approached the League with its particular contribution based upon the principles of its own previous foreign policy. Great Britain, for instance, did not abandon, though she modified, her instinctive insular approach to international affairs. But when the fighting ended in 1918 the people of every country were left with a feeling of fatigue and loathing for war. The League was a product in part of this war-weariness and in part of the special political ideas of Britain, the United States and France ; the British conception having been formulated in the Phillimore Report, the American in the treatises of President Wilson, and the French in the proposals advocated — to a less immediately responsive audience — by Léon Bourgeois. In spite of this composite origin the political philosophy of the League, as embodied in the Covenant, is clear and consistent. It is well, if we are to understand recent events, to set it out at some length.

*International Anarchy*

The basic idea in this philosophy is that "international anarchy" is the root cause of war. The world needs, said the founders, a system which will fulfil the same function for the competing and conflicting ambitions beyond national frontiers as national government does for those within them. That means to establish, and modify as need arises, a framework of law ; to settle disputes that arise by a judicial or arbitral process ; and to prevent a resort to violence in breach of the law by the prospect, and if need be by the use, of overwhelming collective force. Within each State we make as individuals the innumerable adjustments required by the daily business of life without violence, without resort to the courts, and, for the most part, with good-will, precisely because there is both law and a machinery of physical force in reserve to support it. A League system, to be effective, must have in the background a similar power to compel. Without this power it will be unable to persuade ; but given the power to compel by force, the use of force will not normally be necessary ; persuasion will be practicable. Instead of force being, as in the pre-war period of international anarchy, the competitive weapon with which each nation seeks to establish its "rights" or to attain the principal objectives of its own foreign policy, the founders of the League thought of force, collectively organised, as the power in the background to induce obedience to a system of law.

Where human activities and ambitions interact, they will sometimes conflict ; where Governments are associated with the interested parties, such conflicts may involve the danger of war. If there is no other method of securing a settlement except the one party's submission to the other's armed power, then each will seek that power — and the "prestige" which depends upon the known ability and will to use it. The search will be competitive ; and in a world with several "Great Powers" each will fear the



others and none can be secure against a combination. This means that every dispute is essentially a trial of strength, and the most trivial may be as dangerous as one in which great interests are involved. Fear becomes the first motive in the search for power, and power, once it is achieved, inspires fear in others. "Prestige", being the only available instrument with which to secure national objectives without actual war, is the chief goal of diplomacy ; it is essentially a function of anarchy.

### *Pre-War Diplomacy*

The history of the half-century before the last war, as analysed, for example, in Lowes Dickinson's classic book *The International Anarchy*, proves the accuracy of this diagnosis beyond reasonable question or dispute. We see during that period five great countries — Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Russia and Great Britain — as the protagonists in the European, and indeed in the world, arena. Just outside this first rank is a sixth country, Italy, at that time not quite a Great Power. From the other hemisphere there is an occasional impact from the U.S.A., and half-way through the period a new country, Japan, begins to emerge as a no longer negligible factor in the calculations of the "Big Five". The rest of the world lived, for the most part, subject to the favour or displeasure of these five. Central and South America were indeed apart, under the protection of the Monroe Doctrine. But Asia was subject to European rule or to exploitation through rival spheres of influence. Africa was partitioned. In Europe the present Poland was divided between three of the Great Powers ; Czechoslovakia was incorporated in one of them, the Baltic States in another ; the Balkans, though regarded as a tinder-box which might start an unwelcome conflagration involving the greater Powers, might just as well have been described as an arena in which these Powers tried out their strength. Other

countries maintained a precarious independence with the aid of the jealousies, or, more rarely, with a collective guarantee, of the stronger Powers. Dominating the fate of the whole Continent, and, in large measure, of the world, is a never-ending, extremely complicated, almost unintelligible "power game" of the Big Five. They are perpetually attempting, by methods obviously very dangerous, to attain objectives which by comparison with the risks seem almost worthless. Indeed, as we watch them, it becomes more and more clear that the main purpose in achieving any particular aim is less its intrinsic value than the demonstration it will afford of the successful country's power, the additional "prestige" it will provide for the next attempt. It is a dangerous game, and every one of the Five realises that, if it is strong enough to fight one of the others, it cannot alone fight a combination. Each of them, therefore, is engaged in a feverish search for allies, preferably so combined that it will be itself the strongest in its own group, and the group as a whole stronger than any opposing one. It is a competition carried on feverishly, secretly, unscrupulously. The running is made first by Napoleon III in France, and then by Germany under the greatest master in the art, Bismarck, whose success drives those threatened by it along the same path, till in the time of his less skilful successors they have their chance. All are drawn into the game, Germany the leader, Great Britain the last and most reluctant. But none dare stand out. Even an invincible Navy, and a country and empire mostly inaccessible except by sea, do not exempt us; the Low Countries are too near, the North-West Frontier of India too vulnerable to a dominant land Power.

All Five act on certain assumptions, regarded as so certain as to be never questioned and scarcely ever mentioned. Recurrent wars are regarded as inevitable, and are the legitimate and indispensable instruments of national policy. They must not, however, be undertaken lightly

and never, if it can be avoided, except when diplomacy has created a situation in which victory may be expected.

The principal object in diplomacy is therefore to establish such a relation to the other principal countries (whether by joining combinations, or by preventing their formation by others, or by means of a "balancing" attitude towards them) as will enable national objectives to be obtained without war. The "prestige" of a Government is the measure of the success it has achieved in this purpose and its instrument for future success. In negotiations on specific questions, success is usually desired and failure feared because of the effect on this prestige. It follows that, in the most dangerous crises, the issues of war or peace turn more upon prestige than upon the merits of the actual dispute or the value of the tangible prize. War may therefore be risked on what seems the most trivial occasion, for everyone feels that one surrender will make another more likely and there is no end to such a process — except a later war under less advantageous conditions. Prestige is thus not merely a matter of ministers', or even national, vanity — though both enter into it and may be important on some occasions ; it is essentially the measure of a country's ability to enforce a national policy, whether for the defence of existing rights or the acquisition of new ones. It is the only instrument for this purpose apart from war itself. The prestige of a country, in a word, is the expectation that it will win in war, and therefore an instrument for gaining actual victory without war. War will therefore be risked to increase it or to avoid losing it. And yet nearly all the Governments at nearly all times desire to avoid war. Some are more reluctant than others (and that is a handicap in negotiations as serious as a known weakness of armaments) ; some will actually desire a war at a particular moment, but usually even then only in order to snatch victory when the moment is favourable, so as not to have to fight under less advantageous conditions later.

Diplomacy thus becomes an ever more dangerous game of bluff, each country trying to secure its objectives and increase its prestige through the fear of others that it is ready to fight for them. To watch the interchanges of the Five Powers in the years before 1914 is like watching five conjurers trying to keep a number of balls in the air ; the slightest slip — or the interruption of an outsider — will bring them all down. Year after year skill averts disaster, but with every success it becomes more certain that failure must come soon. A gunboat off Morocco — not quite ; a murder at Sarajevo — crash !

Under such conditions, the goal of victory is success itself and not the tangible prizes. The danger of war cannot be measured by considering the nature of these prizes. The "causes of war" in the ordinary sense, divergencies of tangible interest, are quite secondary — almost irrelevant — at least quite remote from the actual point of danger. Now and then, — in the negotiations for a sphere of influence in Persia, for example, — there may be a discernible economic advantage, and a group of special interests may egg on their Government. But in the worst crises, such as that of Sarajevo, any such element is remote. In some cases hereditary hatreds and remembered grievances may play a part. But again they are a secondary factor. Great Britain moves in a few years from contemplating an alliance with Germany to forming an *entente* with France. To Germany, Russia is first a secret ally and then a potential foe. Nor are any general political sympathies of primary importance ; a Liberal parliament in England shows distaste for an *entente* with the Czar but this does not affect policy. Everything is subordinated, and necessarily subordinated, to the quest for power — and for prestige, its projected shadow.

"The economic necessities", says Spender of 1914, "which in previous ages were supposed to have driven nations to war had been largely removed by modern conditions. International finance was more and more

operating across national boundaries, raw material was accessible to all, doors were open to immigration, tariffs were moderate, there was a free exchange of goods over a vast area. Economically and materially the nations had nothing to gain by war or conquest, but this did not affect the belief of the dominant Powers that military ascendancy and acquisition of territory were marks of national greatness, and periodical trials of strength a necessary part of the historical process."

### *The "Causes of War"*

It is clear, surely, with these facts before us, that no policy that is simply directed towards the gradual remedying of economic grievances, necessary as that is, can remove this anarchy, and with it the danger of war. As long as "prestige" and power alone are the means by which countries can further their interests, whether they be legitimate or illegitimate, so long anarchy must continue. Even if we were successful in a policy of economic appeasement beyond the dreams of its most ardent advocate, we could not now in a decade secure economic and financial conditions as favourable to peace as those which existed in 1914. It will be objected that in saying this I am assuming the retention of the "capitalist" system and that, if capitalism could everywhere be replaced by socialism or communism, the economic strains that cause dangerous international conflicts would be so far removed that war would be eliminated even though national Governments remained with their sovereignty unimpaired and unrestricted. I will not now discuss the consequences, for me incalculable, of a change that could scarcely result except from a series of civil revolutions. For the moment I am only arguing that economic policy as advocated, for example, by Mr. Cordell Hull, though a potent help for peace, can by itself give no assurance of it.

So it is with the other so-called "causes of war". We

may, we must, ease the strains that result from political grievances, by such changes of frontier and of methods of government as will to the utmost possible extent enable peoples of different races to be ruled by those of their own race or of races whose rule they will willingly accept. But when all that is humanly possible has been done in this respect, there will still remain unsatisfied minorities and conflicting economic interests. And unless there is some sufficiently strong system of order to restrain the resort to violence, claimants for the redress of grievances will seek to acquire power and prestige in order to obtain the satisfaction they have failed to secure by negotiation.

### *World Government*

The indispensable condition, therefore, for ending violence between nations is the same as that for ending violence between individuals. There must be a system of government, comprehensive enough to include those between whom violence may occur, strong enough to control them. And it must be prepared, in the last resort, to use force to maintain law and order. The more comprehensive that system is, the more firmly established it is upon the willing loyalty of its members, the greater the readiness of each of them to use force if need be in the common cause,— the less likely is the actual use of force to be necessary. Persuasion will take its place.

Ultimately the idea of such a world order must mean a world federation, or at least a federation between countries who are collectively strong enough to control the rest. The Covenant, however, embodied an intermediate principle, and made the League not a federal or super-State, but an inter-State, system. It provided that the separate national States should in certain prescribed cases restrict their liberty of action — in particular should not “resort to war” except after a defined process of arbitration and a definite delay ; and that they should help each

other in case one of them was assailed in breach of this principle. Except in these limited, but important respects all States retained their sovereign rights of free decision unimpaired, and decisions upon any common line of action required unanimity to be binding. Provisions as to changes in the existing status, as in Article 19, or as to the general co-operation on problems of general interest, economic or humanitarian, were designed to encourage, not to compel. Only at this last stage of "resort to war" was the Covenant imperative, and even then "a gap" was intentionally left for war measures, if there was no unanimous agreement among the non-disputants as to the merits of the dispute.

The Covenant system as a whole, then, was not an attempt to establish a complete form of world government. It was a cautious step in that direction, going as far as its framers thought politically possible. The narrow limitation of the matters on which majority decisions (or even decisions by all except the disputants) could be taken, the "gap" for resort to war after delay and disagreement, are instances of the acute sense of the framers of the Covenant that if obligations were not strictly limited they would probably not be observed, even if they were formally accepted. Subsequent experience has, I think, shown that they were wiser in their caution than those who, in the early history of the League, thought the line of progress was to extend the obligations of the Covenant. The Geneva "Protocol" of 1924, and the proposal of 1929 to incorporate the Kellogg-Briand Pact in the Covenant, would have not only "closed the gap" but made the Sanction system applicable to the most difficult class of cases which the Covenant had deliberately excluded. It was, however, more important to root the Covenant obligations securely in the political realities of the world than to extend them — as we shall see later when we consider the military facts which underlay the international situation in the first fifteen post-war years.

Many of us realised that enduring peace could not be assured unless it was possible to establish a form of world government which went further than the intermediate "inter-State" League system. But we were content with the Covenant, not only because no more was practicable at the time, but also because it contained the possibility of growth and expansion. We believed that if the tides of public opinion making for international government in each country and throughout the world were sufficiently strong, the League could be transformed into a federal system by a gradual and insensible process. For every new treaty or agreement, negotiated voluntarily between sovereign States, is a restriction upon the free exercise of their sovereign rights. Seeing that there is no necessary limit to this process, there is nothing except the contrary wish of the constituent States to prevent it from leading up to a federal system, or at least approaching it so nearly as to make the final transition easy and practicable. At the same time, since each step in such a process is voluntary, there is less danger of a sudden reaction which would destroy the new structure so far as it has already been built. It was not unreasonably hoped, therefore, that a world system would grow gradually, each new advance being consolidated before the next was taken, and that it would be attained by persuasion and consent without violence or civil revolution. Nor was the much misunderstood requirement of unanimity an insuperable obstacle to this process ; on the contrary it was the safety-valve. "Unanimity" saved the legal equality of rights and voting power of States of different size. It was an expression of the inter-State, as distinct from the super-State, principle. It was obviously impossible to expect that a minority of nations, consisting of States vastly superior in population and wealth, should have their policies and actions determined by a majority of smaller and weaker nations. But "unanimity", whilst it preserved the legal equality of rights between States, did



not in practice prevent the larger States from exercising an influence that was proportionate to their strength. Unanimity was usually, though not invariably, obtained by the influence of a potent minority over a greater number of smaller States.

This result was indeed so frequent as to be very often resented as undue influence. This resentment was largely based on a misconception, for if a small State ought to have an equal right to justice, in any dispute with one more powerful, it clearly ought not to have an equal influence in determining general world policy — otherwise the *per capita* influence of a Belgian would be seven times that of a Frenchman.

The system was thus one which could reasonably be expected to secure justice and to grow, as the public opinion of the world permitted and required, into a more complete form of world government, which the makers of the Covenant thought it impracticable to establish overnight. They realistically based the structure of the new system upon the existing physical and political relations of the world. They foresaw the conditions under which, and the processes by which, a limited world government might grow into a real world federation. The system they established was the most ambitious political experiment the world has ever seen. For some years it looked as if it would succeed. The world may yet return to it. In the meantime, we shall do well to consider the causes of its — at least temporary — failure.

## CHAPTER II

### THE POLITICAL IDEAS OF 1919

WE have seen how the foreign policy of Great Britain was conditioned by the geographical situation of the country. Britain, mistress of the seas, and confident of her ability to protect her own shores, her Empire and her trade by means of an unrivalled Navy, adopted an attitude towards the dangers of international anarchy which was markedly different from that of France and the other continental countries which entered the League. Other countries too had an equally distinctive attitude.

Before considering therefore the main tasks of the League and the obstacles which it encountered, we shall do well to examine the contribution which each of the Great Powers made to the League system, the ideas which they brought to it, and the extent to which the adhesion of each was weakened by an insistence upon what were conceived to be the exigencies of a national foreign policy.

The world was weary of war and anarchy. But a negative reaction was not enough. A positive and creative force was needed. Would the intense experience of four years of world war suffice to create new loyalties and new political instincts and ideals strong enough to support a new political system which must limit and control national sovereignties? For a time it seemed so, for the League idea spread widely; it was accepted and proclaimed with genuine and general enthusiasm and with little dissent; it grew in strength and successfully averted successive wars. But the deeper forces upon which the enduring strength and weakness of systems of government depend were invisible, potent and

little changed by the new ideals and the new political experiment. The instinctive loyalties that had grown through centuries round jealous national States were not destroyed by four years of a war which had fomented if it had also discredited them.

### *The United States of America* •

When the League of Nations was formed, Germany was unhappily excluded for the time from membership and the prospect of Russia's adhesion was remote. While the majority of the smaller and weaker States at once joined, only four of the Great Powers, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan, were original members. America failed to ratify the Covenant ; and it is with this *gran rifiuto* that we must begin in tracing and appreciating its record. For whilst the origins of the League of Nations are to be found in much devoted work and patient preparation, both individual and collective, in several countries, its realisation was mainly due to President Wilson. It was the President of the U.S.A. who, both in his Fourteen Points before the Armistice and at Paris during the negotiations, pressed for the establishment of a new international system as the first and greatest objective of the Peace Settlement. It was he who insisted ; the others accepted. But the country which thus, through its President, was chiefly responsible for the inclusion of the Covenant as an integral part of the Treaties — Chapter I of each of them — was itself the only one of the greater signatories to reject them when presented for ratification. The rejection was by a narrow margin. There was an actual majority in favour in the Senate ; the votes fell short only by seven of the two-thirds majority required for the ratification of a Treaty. And this narrow margin depended on the cumulative effect of many unhappy factors, some in themselves accidental or trivial. Wilson had failed to associate the Republicans effectively with his

Administration either during the war or during the peace negotiations. He gave the appearance of claiming his success during the war and his dominant position in Europe — a position of power and popularity which for a few brief weeks exceeded that of any man in all history — as a triumph for the Democratic Party. This attitude produced its natural reaction, which became serious as the criticism of the Treaty of Versailles, in which the Covenant was incorporated, grew in strength. Nevertheless, the Covenant would most certainly have been ratified but for the addition to all political causes of purely personal ones. Senator Lodge quarrelled with President Wilson for reasons that had originally little to do with the League of Nations, of which he had been a supporter, and he was inspired in organising the attack against it by his desire to wound the President. And even at the last moment Wilson could probably have secured the required vote if he had been prepared to save the face of his opponents by trivial concessions. But with all his great personal qualities, that of compromising when necessary was lacking, and the opportunity was lost.

The two-thirds majority was not attained. Just how important that vote was it is difficult to say. For it is possible that even if America had joined the League, the movement towards isolationism would have resulted, as the experiences of the war receded, in a withdrawal or in the adoption of a negative and unconstructive attitude at Geneva. It is possible, but not certain. What is certain is that America's abstention made an absolutely fundamental difference to the prospects, the power and the actual evolution of the League. If America had been in the League, and had ratified with Great Britain the triple pact in defence of France, it is probable that the policy of conciliation towards Germany would have succeeded. For France, relieved by the double guarantee of the panic fears which drove her to a policy of repression, and brought under the combined influence of Great Britain and the

U.S.A., would have supported the policy of a Briand against that of a Poincaré, as Great Britain and the more magnanimous section of the French public were by themselves unable to induce her to do. And such a policy of reconciliation, early begun and strongly pursued, would probably have kept the Weimar Republic in being and brought Germany into the League as a full, sincere and loyal member. The peace of Europe would then have been securely founded upon an international system capable not only of enforcing law, but also of changing it when needed.

For America's abstention changed fundamentally the League's ability to enforce its policy. It was not merely that the armed power of America was not available to support the principles of the League, and that her abstention from the League's councils weakened its inner force and encouraged defiance on the part of dissatisfied nations. The loyal members of the League themselves were obliged, in all their deliberations, to keep one eye anxiously fixed upon this Great Power whose judgement might, or might not, agree with theirs — for against her opposition they could not apply their principal weapon of economic sanctions.

Apart from the events already described, which ended in the rejection of the Covenant by the U.S.A., other fundamental causes for America's abstention are not difficult to understand. She felt that the principal dangers to peace were likely to originate in Europe, and that it lay with Europe primarily to deal with them. She was separated from them not, like Great Britain, by twenty-one miles of sea, but by three thousand. She is herself impregnable, so long as the European democracies continued to exist as Great Powers, and able, at a price, to abstain from a European war if she so decides. For her a policy of isolation and self-sufficiency, though ultimately impracticable, was not so demonstrably impossible as for Great Britain. America was beyond question

deeply interested in the maintenance of peace, but her actual existence was not involved in the same way as that of European and less self-sufficient countries. This difference in position, this geographical remoteness, doubtless explains the attitude of selective aloofness which, in the post-war period, made America unwilling to accept obligations and engagements in order to strengthen the world system of defence against war.

### *France*

Soon after the end of the war, with the defeat and disarmament of Germany and the demobilisation of the British and American armies, France was left with an army which was incontestably the strongest in Europe, or indeed in the world. Her strength was moreover increased by alliances with the new States, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and the enlarged States, Rumania and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (now renamed Yugoslavia). The military supremacy of France was for a time the basic fact of European history. Post-war France was not, however, militaristic in the sense that she had aggressive ambitions. She did not want war; she desired no new territory; she asked no more than the maintenance of the existing Treaty situation. But her outlook *was* militaristic in the sense that she saw no solution for a military danger except in terms of military preparation. The idea of removing a foreign danger by a political penetration, by a conciliatory policy designed to reduce the will to aggression, is a difficult conception for the calculating, concrete, "realistic" French mind. Conscious, moreover, of having the strongest army, and for a time the largest financial resources, on the continent of Europe, she desired to retain both — and to make both of them felt in all negotiations of current policy. She desired neither to bankrupt a debtor nor to conquer others — but she was not unwilling for them to

be aware that she could do so if she wished.

Yet French policy was inspired by a realisation that this military supremacy, overwhelming though it might be for the moment, had a precarious expectation of life. Against any probable opposing strength France wanted to see a sufficient superiority of military forces on which she could rely. These could not for long be hers alone ; she must then have allies. Alternatively, if she could feel sure of the League system working and exerting adequate strength in time of need, that might do instead. But there must be, she felt, no loophole, no danger of evasion by members or of interference with the League's restraining action by countries which were not members. French foreign policy, therefore, moved between two focal points — on the one hand, adherence to the Covenant of the League, and on the other, trust in special military alliances. At different times, and in response to different external events, first one and then the other type of policy has prevailed. Immediately after the war French pride in victory, conscious strength and apprehension for the future, immediate financial weakness, the recent memories of the war and the present spectacle of the devastated regions, all combined to drive France towards a policy of extortion and repression against Germany. This policy was modified in its application to some extent by the influence of more moderate, and more foresighted, sections of French public opinion, and to a large extent by the influence and pressure of Great Britain. For the latter had secured the destruction of the German Navy and the seizure of German merchant ships and colonies, and had more to fear from the effect on her foreign trade of excessive reparations from Germany than she had to hope from any share she might secure of such reparations.

These modifying influences were sufficient, as we shall see, to prevent a policy of repression from doing more than postpone a resurgence of German strength, but they were not sufficient to promote a policy of conciliation

which might have incorporated Germany as an equal and willing member in a European system.

For the time, then, all events turned upon the precarious but overwhelming military supremacy of France, and upon its relation to the alliances with the new or newly enlarged States which were all primarily interested in the preservation of the *status quo*.

The consequence of this one-sided distribution of physical strength within the League was, as we shall see, the frustration of whatever forces were making for changes in the *status quo*. In any question turning upon a divergence of interests between the victors and the vanquished in the last war, all the strength in the League, and the overwhelming balance of strength in Europe as a whole, was on the side of the former. Disinterested neutrals who might have secured justice if the pressures of the interested parties on either side had been nearly equal were altogether too weak to combat so one-sided a grouping of forces.

Equally important, however, as an explanation of the League's early history was the fact that the military strength of France and her allies, being so great as to be unchallengeable, did at least make a major war impossible. It was a peace through domination, but it was peace. It gave a period of fifteen years in which peace through dominance might have been replaced by peace through conciliation, based upon an international system and an equipoise of strength within it. It gave a shelter under which the League was able to build up its mechanism, to carry out successfully vast projects of financial reconstruction, to settle many secondary disputes and to acquire a strength sufficient to avert or arrest wars between secondary states. Unhappily, as a by-product of these benefits, it also disguised from many of those concerned with League policy the reality and the significance of the basic physical fact of French military dominance.

But whilst the military supremacy of France must



be recognised as the most important single factor in the evolution of the character of the League, we must equally remember that the root of French policy was not really an arrogance born of conscious strength, but a sense of insecurity born of the knowledge that her strength was precarious. Her financial strength was not based upon a productive wealth equal to that of Britain, nor was her military supremacy based upon a man-power or an industrial organisation equal to that of Germany. The consequence was that, in her search for security, she regarded the League as an integral part of her national defence. But it was a supplement to her main form of defence, not a substitute for the clear and decisive superiority of military strength which she aimed at securing through her own forces and those of her allies.

### *Great Britain*

It must be admitted that this unwillingness of France to rely primarily upon the League system for her defence was accentuated by the character of the contribution that British policy made to the League. At the end of the war, Great Britain was left with not only a Navy incontestably superior to that of any other country, but with an Army and Air Force each for the moment probably stronger than any other in Europe or in the world. On land and in the air this superiority rapidly disappeared with demobilisation. But the superiority of the British Navy remained till it was challenged by the U.S.A. and replaced by an acceptance of "parity" with that country. Even then Britain continued to be the strongest naval power in the Old World, while her financial and economic resources, though inferior to those of the U.S.A., were greater than those of any European country.

Britain's instinctive insular attitude towards international engagements remained unchanged by the experience of the war. Britain's inherited "balance of

power" psychology is simply a reflection of her reliance upon her insular security, and her conditions her approach to all continental commitments. Whilst, therefore, to France the League system appeared to be a not entirely adequate guarantee against the loss of an existing but precarious domination, Britain, as her critics maintain, regarded the League as a device for maintaining a continental balance of power without entangling her further than was absolutely necessary in European commitments. Britain was not prepared fully to face the fact that the Navy could never again give us that measure of security it did in the last century ; that she could not, whatever her efforts, defend herself against probable, and in the end inevitable, combinations of Powers except in company with others ; that association simply in the form of alliances must lead to war upon the largest scale ; and that therefore the *only* course of safety, for herself and for the Empire, was a strong and effective League.

But Britain genuinely considered "peace the first British interest". She desired no acquisition of new territory and wanted nothing better than an environment in which she could deal with the internal difficulties of the British Empire. In thinking of the danger of war twenty years ago she was not thinking of a war in which she would be one of the original disputants. She thought of a conflict between other countries which might involve her later on, and which, in any event, would bring impoverishment to her customers and injure her world trade. Consequently, it was primarily as an instrument for preventing the outbreak of war between others that she valued the League. This rather "external" attitude to the League meant that the idea of collective action as an integral part of the scheme of her *own* national defence never entered into the main stream of British political thought or became part of her actual policy. She thought of herself rather as "making contributions to world peace", being satisfied, with what is now seen to have

been an unjustified complacency, that her Navy and the seas it patrolled placed her own shores beyond the reach of aggression. France, on the other hand, always regarded the collective obligations of the League as an element in her own defence, provided she could be sure that they would be observed. The extent to which the whole of Britain's foreign policy was influenced by her belief in naval supremacy, and the extent to which this belief could hinder British co-operation in international agreements tending towards collective security, may be seen in the refusal by even such an imaginative statesman as Mr. Lloyd George to accept at Paris President Wilson's Second Point which proposed "Absolute Freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants". A collective guarantee of the unrestricted entry of sea-borne imports except to an aggressor country was the greatest prize Great Britain could have hoped to bring from the Paris Conference. She might (but for the subsequent rejection of the "Treaties" by the U.S.A., which was not then anticipated) have secured it not by asking for it, but by accepting what was pressed upon her. But she refused it. Whilst genuinely supporting collective agreements and the League system as a means of preventing wars breaking out between others, Britain had not yet come to regard them as integral factors in her own defence.

### *Italy*

Of the other Great Powers, two only, Italy and Japan, were inside the League. Of these, Italy was at that time only just, and partly by courtesy, in the rank of Great Powers. She was numbered among the victors by the efforts of others, to which she had not contributed a proportionate share. Her Government was weak, she could not compare with the two principal Powers in the League

in military and naval strength, and her influence was comparatively small. Italy, however, was a country with a rapidly growing population and, at any rate with the establishment of the Fascist dictatorship, conscious of reserves of strength not yet brought into play. Her outlook was, therefore, the opposite of that of "sated" countries who were content to keep and develop what they had and had everything to gain from an assurance of the *status quo*. But Italy was still weak; conscious of this weakness she sought for associates, while aiming at power in diplomacy by an aggressiveness of language which outran her intentions. She was divided between a desire to avoid restrictions on future expansion, and an equally strong desire to avoid isolation. She was thus an adherent, but a reluctant adherent, to the new peace system.

Italian policy thus exhibited all the disconcerting and dangerous characteristics which attend the transition from a position of resented inferiority to one of equality. Her guiding principle in foreign policy was apparently to maintain her association with the great victorious Powers and at the same time to exploit a kind of "nuisance value". Disliking any form of international agreement which tended, by collective action against war, to stabilise the *status quo*, Signor Mussolini did his best to obstruct it so long as he could see any chance that he could prevent an agreement being made. But he did not carry his opposition so far as to risk the agreement being made between others while he was left out. Thus Italy impeded the work of the League of Nations — but remained a member. She put difficulties in the way of the Austrian Reconstruction Scheme — but in the end was a party to it. She obstructed the Locarno Treaties — but made a rapid *volte-face* towards the end of the negotiations. She poured ridicule on the negotiations for the Kellogg Pact while their fate was uncertain — and then signed. Stay with the stronger group and strive for a more important place in it; use Germany for increasing pressure, but don't go

over to her side ; oppose agreements but don't get left out of them ! These were the maxims of Italian foreign policy in the first post-war decade.

### *Japan*

Japan was distant in space and remote in her interests ; she was a friendly auxiliary rather than an active partner in the tasks that engaged the League in the earlier years. She received a Mandate over the former German islands in the Western Pacific, but she failed in her attempt to obtain for herself the German leasehold of Tsingtao in China. Her foreign policy since the last war has fluctuated between the chauvinism of the old military party — directed specially towards the aim of breaking up and dominating China —and liberal democratic tendencies which were for a time greatly strengthened by the victory of the Western democracies over Germany in the Great War. For a time it seemed that Japan would be a loyal member of the League, even though somewhat detached from its political work in Europe. But the military party, unassimilated to the new order, was merely biding its time, and in 1931 circumstances gave it the opportunity to take control once more of the country's destinies. Japan's Manchurian adventure was the first great open defiance of the League by one of its members. Nevertheless, its significance was not at first fully appreciated, for it was possible to explain it by the special naval position in the Far East, in the absence of the U.S.A. and Russia from the League, and to reflect that the future of the peace system depended not upon a war in Eastern Asia, but upon the European situation and the relations between the Great European Powers.

### *Other Countries*

It was the policies and attitudes of the Great Powers which determined the main course of the League's activity

or inactivity. But the outlook and special interests of the small countries had a considerable part in giving it its distinctive character, and when there were differences between the stronger States often determined important issues. The smaller countries as such had a special interest in the success of the League, as representing their only hope for equality of rights and for a security not dependent on vassalage to a greater Power or the good fortune of escaping the covetous ambitions of the strong. This general interest in the League, which was common to all the smaller countries was, however, combined with particular preoccupations which modified their outlook and had the effect of dividing them into distinguishable groups, each with its own characteristics. The countries which, like Czechoslovakia and Poland (the latter chauvinist and fearing Russia), had been formed by the Peace Treaties, or which, like Rumania and Jugoslavia, had acquired large additional territory, looked to the League as a defender of the *status quo* and became dependent allies of France within the League system. Their outlook was a formidable obstacle to any attempt to develop the "peaceful change" provisions of the Covenant, very slightly adumbrated in Article 19. As against these were the ex-allies of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria (not original members but soon admitted), who had suffered loss of territory by the Peace Treaties. These were inclined to look to any country, such as Italy or Germany, who might offer them some hope of securing a change in the treaty settlement and regaining something of what they had lost. At the same time they were too weak to develop any overt opposition within the League, from which, moreover, they obtained very substantial benefits in the form of relief and financial assistance. In a very different category were the Northern countries, Holland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, which had been neutral in the war, and (with one small exception) had neither gained nor lost territory by it. These countries

were, in the best sense, "disinterested" members of the League. They usually had no national interest in the actual disputes dealt with by the League, but they were genuinely anxious that a settlement should be reached, and reached by League methods and on principles likely to strengthen both the League and the prospects of peace. Their influence was, therefore, almost always salutary, and it was sometimes decisive when the stronger Powers differed. Had there been a true equipoise of strength among the more powerful members, as there would have been if Germany had remained and with growing strength had continued to pursue her aims within instead of outside the system, their influence would have been of great importance. It would have probably turned the scale in favour of securing the kind of changes in the *status quo* which would have removed the real grievances and injustices of the treaty settlement. As it was, however, it was only occasionally that they occupied a balancing position. They were not strong enough to modify the policy of the stronger Powers where these were united, and in particular they could not offset the great preponderance of strength in the Council in favour of resisting any territorial change. For the rest, this group of small countries, with vivid memories of what they had suffered through the blockade, and at the same time realising their vulnerability to attack by an adjacent stronger country, were nervous about the League's sanction clauses, and were anxious to make their application more optional than the Covenant had contemplated.

Lastly, there was the group of the South American members, whose participation in the League was the least real and substantial of all. If we classify the European groups we have mentioned as "interested" and "disinterested" respectively, we might call the South Americans the "uninterested". They acted together to secure a representation on the Council that was out of proportion to their effective share in the League's work, and their representatives were mainly Ambassadors or Ministers

accredited to European countries, and thus more interested in their relations with those countries than in the business before the League. This state of affairs resulted naturally from the contrast between the intrinsic importance of South America and the concentration of the League's attention upon European problems. There were exceptions, but in general the South American *bloc* did not add to the working efficiency of the Council.

The community of interest within each of these sets of countries was expressed in various kinds of informal organisations. It became the custom of the Northern countries to consult together, and since the tradition grew up of electing one, but no more, of their number to the Council, that representative came to reflect the policy not only of his own country but of the whole group. So, too, the members of the Little Entente worked together and consulted France. Similarly, the members of the British Commonwealth met informally in a British Delegation. In this way the League's main executive authority, the Council, reflected the policies not only of the States actually represented on it, but also the policies of the other countries associated with some of those States, and became the League in miniature. It gave a true representation of League membership — but not of a world with powerful countries outside the League. Upon this difference its fate turned.

A few words will suffice for other member States. Spain had no national policy to press. Her representative, through personal qualities, exercised important mediatory functions with a Latin outlook which served as a complement to the more Anglo-Saxon outlook of the Northern countries. Greece played a rôle determined by its very varied internal history, being an active member under Venizelos, a rôle quickly changed under Pangalos, and inactive under other Governments. As we are only concerned in this chapter with the contributions brought to the League in its early years, we need not here consider



Germany, Turkey, and Russia whose connection with the League was of a later date.

I have indicated the character of the League's membership and the political ideas and outlook which the different States brought to the formation of its policy. The student who wishes to understand the forces which were to shape its subsequent history must realise that the League was not, and could not be, an external authority. Its general aspect was necessarily a kind of composite photograph of its member States. He must also, however, be careful not to ignore the personal qualities of those who represented their countries on the Council of the League at crucial periods. The bare outline of achievements and failures which follows will be for the most part without emphasis on these personal influences. But they were sometimes of decisive importance. Lord Cecil, a parent and throughout the apostle of the League, but partly perhaps for that reason not a Foreign Minister, is among British statesmen in a class by himself in League affairs. But there were also Foreign Ministers, like Mr. Arthur Henderson, Sir Austen Chamberlain and Monsieur Briand, who understood the League's constitution and purpose, sincerely accepted its fundamental principles. They formed their own conceptions of the course it should follow (which were not identical but were equally sincere), and then pursued their purpose consistently, both in their own Cabinets and at Geneva, in good and evil times alike. The League was not so fortunate in their successors.

It is with a consciousness of these underlying pulls and counter-pulls of differing policies, preoccupations and personalities always in our minds that we must follow the fortunes of the new instrument of government at Geneva in the twenty years that followed the war.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TASKS OF THE LEAGUE

THE League was thus constructed as an "inter-State" system within which the member States undertook to limit their freedom to resort to war, and to give certain assistance to States attacked in breach of this obligation. It provided a mechanism for the indefinite extension of international agreements and co-operation as far as the Governments (under such influences as their people could exercise upon and *through* them) might desire. It aimed in this way at establishing an embryonic form of world government through which international law could be made, interpreted, and enforced. These functions were, however, to a large extent conditional on consent, *i.e.* upon unanimous, not majority, decisions.

The League was entrusted with two primary tasks : to apply the law and defend victims against the breach of it through "collective security" ; and to secure the revision of the law where new conditions, or grievances resulting from the existing law, made this necessary.

In addition the League provided a machinery through which States attempt to negotiate a reduction and limitation of armaments ; and could co-operate on questions less immediately related to peace and war — economic, financial, social and humanitarian. In a happier world this might prove to be its main work ; and a "positive peace" so built up would be the best bulwark against war. And even in these last twenty years it was in this last sphere that the League has been most successful.

Neither its temporary success nor its later failure in essaying the first two of the above tasks depended upon the detailed provisions of the Covenant. As we shall see,

it was not because of any defects in Article 16 — though there are some — that “collective security” failed. It was not because Article 19 is vague and indefinite in its terms that revision did not take place. No possible change in these articles would have made any noticeable difference in the subsequent evolution of the League. This evolution was wholly due to the contending political ideas and physical strength of the States concerned.\* It is these really determining factors that we must consider.

### “*Collective Security*”

The nature of the twin tasks of the League and the relation between them needs to be clearly stated. The principle of “collective security” is quite simple, though it has often been disastrously misunderstood. It depends upon the simple fact that world peace, like order anywhere, can only be maintained if it is supported by a force which is sufficient to prevent successful assaults upon it, and that in a world which includes seven Great Powers, it is impossible that this should be secured, as it was during the *Pax Romana*, by the dominant power of a single State. Since the instruments of warfare are, with a few exceptions and some variations in degree, alternatively weapons of defence or of offence, a single country in a world which contains a number of others of comparable resources cannot make itself secure against any possible hostile combination. The vast size and resources of the U.S.A. and Russia make these two countries possible exceptions to the general rule, but Britain, even with her great naval power, is no longer an exception since the invention of the aeroplane. Nor can a country hope for more than a precarious and temporary safety through alliances based upon a community of interests. For community of interest is always liable to vanish, and in any case rivals will play the same game and arrange counter-alliances. The inevitable end of such a com-

petitive search for alliances is the formation of two vast hostile camps as in 1914. If, however, all, or almost all, countries of great strength, as well as weaker ones, can bind themselves to reciprocal defence on the basis of a treaty and defined principles, each of them can — so long as the obligations are sincerely accepted and loyally observed by at least the great majority — find a national security in and through a collective security. Under such a system the armed forces of each country can in effect contribute to the common defence of all, and the safety of each will depend not only, nor mainly, on its own strength but on the strength of all but the aggressor. More than that, the prospect of the overwhelming force which all the rest can bring against a single would-be attacker will deter the latter from taking action. And once the system is established and trusted, there can be a gradual reduction in national forces until each is only a little beyond the police strength required for internal order. For so long as the reduction is approximately equal in each country, safety is as well assured, indeed better assured, on a low than on a high level of armaments. Doubtless, at the best, the new system would require to be tested before it could be trusted. But if the League had included all, or nearly all, the big States as loyal members, the method of demonstrating its power might have been easy and bloodless. The prohibition of imports from, and exports to, the offending State would have sufficed. Blockade even — the “prevention of intercourse” — would not have been necessary, still less the direct use of military forces.

No, but it is obvious that the one indispensable condition of such a system of collective security is that the States who can be relied upon to be loyal to it shall be superior in strength to those who may assail it. Indeed there must be a substantial margin in order to offset the probably weaker determination of a country to fight for what, on a short view, is the interest of another State as

compared with that of the aggressor who is pursuing a purely national purpose. And, if war is to be avoided, the margin must be great enough and obvious enough not merely to defeat, but to deter, aggression.

### “ Revision ”

The crux of the problem of collective security is to ensure that this indispensable condition is always fulfilled. This is very directly related to the League's other essential task, that of securing a revision of treaties. For grievances which originate in unjust, unequal terms imposed by victors after wars, or the unsuitability under changed conditions of arrangements originally just, are likely to make the aggrieved countries unwilling to defend, or even to refrain from assailing, the collective system. The essential point is that countries with grievances should direct their efforts, not to breaking the collective system, but to securing change within and through it. And they will only continue to do this if they see that they are obtaining results. For this reason, collective security was bound to be undermined and finally destroyed, if common defence were used simply to maintain an unchanging *status quo*.

The converse of this is that, in order to make revision by peaceful means possible, there must be a suitable equipoise of political and military strength within the system to compel change. It is idle to expect that countries will easily agree to changes of frontier or sacrifices of cherished national rights, however legitimate the grievances entailed by them upon others, and however necessary such changes may seem in the eyes not only of those who claim the revision but of disinterested judges. The difficulty is perhaps even greater for a democratic state than it is for some kinds of autocracy. For an occasional autocrat may have exceptional foresight and magnanimity of outlook. But democratic leaders can rarely maintain their position

if they are far in advance of their public, and the public is a multiplication of the average man with all his limitation of vision and jealous insistence on the retention of existing rights. It is very rare indeed that any country has renounced important territory or what it considers important rights, except under force or the imminent threat of force. A League system must therefore employ an adequate compelling influence, where change is needed, on the countries from which the concessions are asked. This could be done in the last resort if the governing authority were sufficiently determined, by showing the country in question that if it refused to yield what by the general verdict of disinterested Powers was necessary, it could no longer count upon collective aid in defence against any consequent attack. I wish, myself, that some such provision had been specifically added to Article 19. But it is extremely difficult, and indeed will usually be politically impossible, for a Council which does not include among its members the claimants, or the most active supporters of the claim, to secure revision unless the menace of force from outside is not only serious but imminent. A body largely composed of relatively disinterested Powers may do justice in deciding between two cases, each of which is presented with approximately equal force. But a body composed partly of the friends of the country resisting the claim and partly of those who have no specific interest in the question will scarcely ever do so — except too late. If it does ultimately exercise pressure it will only be under the compulsion of an *external* threat, which will weaken and discredit the system and not strengthen it.

It is commonly said that the League has been unsuccessful because the "change" provisions in Article 19 are inadequate. It is true that this Article is defective, and has never been made operative. But the League machinery is very elastic and easily enables questions of a change of status to be dealt with when the will exists. The

appointment of the Lytton Commission for Manchuria under Article 11 is an instance. Its recommendations were ineffective, not because of any defect of mechanism or procedure, but because there was not the necessary naval power and political determination available to enforce them. So too Article 19 has been inoperative solely because, without adequate pressure of the revisionist countries inside the League, the collective will of the Council was against, and not for, revision. Had the balance been reversed, the necessary procedure would have been quickly arranged within, or as a supplement to, the Covenant provisions.

The failure of Article 19 is, in a word, a special instance of the general failure of the post-war policy of the victorious Allies.

"*Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*" is the first wisdom in politics. Let the victor not disarm till he has conciliated : but let him not tarry in conciliating lest he incite his enemy to rearm against him. The political concessions which bring political fruits are those which are made by a country which is obviously under no physical compulsion to make them. There are instances, as when self-government was given to South Africa in 1906, but they are lamentably rare.

This explanation of the failure to work the treaty revision section of the Covenant work is so fundamental for any understanding of the League's history and of the main political problems of our time that I will add a few further comments.

### *Germany and the League*

When Germany was considering the question of entering the League in 1925 and later, numerous German representatives discussed different aspects of it with those of us who were then working at Geneva. I myself had several of such conversations. The usual opening by the

German representative was to say that the League of Nations and its Council were an organisation controlled by the Allied victors in the war, that its decisions were biased against Germany and her friends, and that Germany naturally hesitated to enter such a system. Many League supporters to whom the same objection had been made seem to have replied with a long defence of the Council's decisions on particular questions and to have argued — indeed with some truth — that Germany's complaint as to injustice was exaggerated. At least, the Germans who talked to me always seemed surprised when I took a completely different line. I always replied, "While I should differ from you in emphasis, and on some points of detail, I agree in substance with your statement that the Council has a pro-Ally, anti-German bias. The decisions have not been just to the German point of view and German interests. This is, however, inevitable so long as the Council is constituted as at present. You may get just decisions from the Court of Justice at the Hague on pure questions of law, but the Council is a political, not a judicial body. It has to decide, not what is the law, but what it is wise to do in given circumstances. It is a body composed of the States who are for the time being members of it. It reflects their points of view and their interests. The decisions at which it arrives must in the nature of the case be the net result of the interacting pulls and pressures of the States who compose it. Some of these are powerful and politically interested. Others are disinterested in the sense that they are only concerned that the decisions should be such as to strengthen the League system and the foundations of peace, but these are for the most part the weaker and less influential States ; their influence could be decisive if the contending pulls of the stronger States were more or less equal, but they cannot possibly be decisive if the pull is all one way. Germany has two choices. She may stay outside. In that case the League must of necessity be



a powerful organising centre of opinion and political associations inimical to Germany's interests, the more damaging because of the idealism behind it.

"Germany can never in that case get real justice until she becomes powerful enough to break the League, and even then it can only be by success in a rivalry of war preparations which will probably lead to a war disastrous to herself and others alike. Alternatively, she can enter the League as a full, determined and permanent member. She will then be one of the principal forces in the League. She will be able to utilise not only her own strength but also that of other countries of revisionist tendency such as Italy. The pull between the '*status quo*' and the 'revisionist' States will be approximately equal. In that case, the influence of the 'disinterested' States such as Sweden, and public opinion even in the '*status quo*' countries themselves and in the U.S.A., will certainly result in a League policy which will secure to Germany full equality of status among the greatest Powers and revision of the unjust provisions of the Treaties. And this can be done in such a way as to save Germany and the world alike from a general war with all its incalculable consequences."

It nearly happened ; we shall see a little later why it did not.

The root problem in the constitution of any system of government, whether national or international, is to obtain a strength sufficient to overcome any force which may assail it. This is not to take a materialistic view of human history and to hold that only force counts and not ideas of political justice. The dilemma is a false one. Ideas cannot in themselves resist force ; but ideas, and ideas alone, direct force. No force can be either assembled or employed except on a basis of human will, determined by human ideas, whether good or bad. Equally, no ideas can prevail in the determination of any political system, or the policy it pursues, unless they can be translated into terms of force. This is true, in the last

analysis, even for the pure pacifist. For either he accepts without modification whatever those who employ force desire to impose, up to and including his own death (though not of course to the surrender of his moral qualities and ideals), or his passive acceptance changes the will of those who employ that force. All government reposes upon force, but upon force controlled by human will, and therefore equally upon political ideals and desires.

Unhappily the underlying forces upon which a political system depends are normally invisible and unrealised as long as that system is functioning without disturbance. And unhappily it is only too easy to take for granted the actual system of government under which we live and to forget how difficult and painful a process it is to establish a new one, so as to root it securely in the ideas and loyalties and traditions of those comprised within it. We forget the secular struggles and bloody conflicts by which our political liberties were won and slowly rooted in political instincts which cannot be quickly acquired.

*Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem.*

## CHAPTER IV

### CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

WE have seen how the composition of League membership in the early years prevented the "peaceful change" side of the League's work being developed, thus allowing pressure for change to develop outside instead of within the system and impeding the evolution of the League into a true international organisation.

We must now consider two obstacles of a somewhat different kind which finally arrested progress along the right line of development. Unlike those which we have so far discussed, these two further obstacles were not, and scarcely could have been, foreseen and counteracted when the Covenant was framed.

#### *The "Inter-State" Principle*

The first of these is related to the strictly inter-State character of the League's constitution. The willingness of a nation to submit the free exercise of sovereign rights to some restriction by an international authority becomes sensibly less as it passes through the medium of those who actively wield power in the States, whether as ministers or officials. The jealous love of power by those who exercise it personally adds a human factor of a strength and importance only known to those who have observed its effects at close quarters. Under the League's constitution, which gives expression to the international only through the inter-State principle, surrenders or restrictions of sovereign liberty of action are voted not by peoples but by Governments. The difference is an important one. It is recognised, for example, in such a true federal system as that of the U.S.A., which in order to counteract it

provides that the members both of the House of Representatives and (since 1913) even of the Senate shall not be appointed by the State Governments but elected by the people. The League system could only have given effect to the full public desire for progress towards an international federation if in each country there had been an effective organisation of the popular will sufficient to determine the character and policy of the national Government. In Great Britain there was an organisation, the League of Nations Union, which might have fulfilled, and for some time did fulfil, this function, but in other countries attempts to follow the same course were unequal and inadequate ; and for this reason the endeavour to mobilise international public opinion across frontiers through a federation of League of Nations Societies was unsuccessful. The International Peace Campaign, on a more democratic basis, might have been more fruitful if it had been started earlier, but it came too late to have any effect in arresting the initial decline of the League.

In retrospect, perhaps, we may consider that it would have been well from the beginning to find a form of expression for world opinion in the League Constitution itself on a principle similar to that embodied in the Constitution of the U.S.A. While the Council of the League represented Governments, there might have been some measure of election of members of the Assembly from unofficial organisations outside the Governments. Such an element, however, could have had only a very limited scope at the start. It could not have outrun the growth of the necessary electing bodies in different countries. But if the principle could have been admitted — as it was in the International Labour Office where the constituent national organisations, of employers and workers, were available — it would have tended to undermine the jealous exclusiveness of national Governments and have slowly prepared the way for direct election on the true federal principle. For that very reason, however, it would

probably have been opposed by some or most of the Governments who accepted the Covenant. And in any case there were other potent forces at work, as we shall see, to drive the world back to nationalism, so that to-day it may seem idle and academic even to mention the idea. But it may be that the tide will turn ; and if so, it is well to consider the possibility of embodying in a reconstituted League a principle of this kind, which might assist its growth towards a federal system.

### *Self-government*

The second of the obstacles to the development of the League resulted from the heterogeneity of the member States and their political systems. In addition to the original signatories, who included countries as diverse as Great Britain and Guatemala, the Covenant provided for the entry of " any fully self-governing State, dominion or colony," subject to certain conditions which are not here relevant. In using the expression " self-governing " the framers of the Covenant doubtless had in mind freedom from external domination rather than a free and democratic internal system of government. But no less certainly they anticipated, and with reason on the facts before them, that the overwhelming majority of League States would be governed through democratic representative institutions, so that the League system would be based upon a considerable measure of political homogeneity in its members.

For the war had been a war for democracy, and the democratic cause had won. And before the war the movement towards free, representative parliamentary forms of government had for half a century been spreading over all the civilised, and part of the half-civilised, world, in an astonishingly triumphant progress. Almost all the countries in Europe had acquired or begun to acquire such constitutions — even in Russia the goal seemed not far distant. South American constitutions were based, at

least nominally, upon the model of the U.S.A. In the British Empire the great Dominions in the continents of America, Africa and Australasia were self-governing ; the great sub-continent of India in Asia was clearly moving towards the same goal ; the rest of the Empire was progressing, through intermediate stages appropriate to varying degrees of civilisation in the same direction. In the Far East Japan had had a limited form of parliamentary government for three decades, and in 1911 the foundation of the Republic in China seemed to be the first and decisive step towards the same end. Other countries followed suit. Parliamentary institutions seemed the right and inevitable accompaniment of progress beyond the stage of semi-barbarism. Russia in 1919 was indeed a notable example of movement in another direction. But the revolution was recent and its issue still uncertain ; Bolshevism was an experiment, not then expected to acquire strength or to endure long.

It was therefore natural to assume that the Governments to be represented at Geneva would be Governments based upon freely elected Parliaments, and likely to share in the same liberal political ideas as prevailed in the great democracies of the U.S.A., the British Commonwealth and France. The ensuing years seemed only to confirm this optimistic outlook. They witnessed the high-water mark of parliamentary institutions. Bolshevism indeed continued ; and, as a more ominous sign, the parliamentary system in Italy was at the close of 1922 replaced by the Fascist régime. But against these retrogressions were advances much more striking. Germany, which before the war had had a Reichstag, but not a genuine parliamentary constitution, became a Republic with a democratic system of government of the most advanced type ; and for a time, in spite of immense difficulties, it seemed to be working well. Austria, which under the Dual Monarchy had been in spite of its Parliaments essentially a monarchical State, became a parlia-

mentary Republic. The new States of Czechoslovakia and Poland established similar systems of government, and the former of them, with its trusted leaders, Masaryk and Beneš, functioned with striking success. The world of the first decade after the war was one in which parliamentary institutions seemed destined to be the basis of government for all civilised nations and the goal of advance for more backward countries. It was natural that the League should be conceived as functioning through Governments of this type, and as likely to find support, and the motive force for its progress, in the political ideas with which they are associated.

It was hard indeed, at that time, to realise how shallow were the roots of parliamentary democracy in those countries which had not developed it for themselves through long centuries of political struggle, as Great Britain, France and the U.S.A. had done. It was hard to realise that merely imitative parliamentary systems were often only autocracies disguised under a fashionable and deceptive cloak which was liable to be discarded under the strain of any violently disruptive forces. It was hard, too, to foresee the character and the strength of these disruptive forces which the economic and political discontents of the next decade and a half were to produce.

It was not long, however, before any idea that members of the League must be self-governing in the sense of being based upon parliamentary democracy (as distinct from the alternative meaning of "independent of external control") had to be abandoned. Italy was among the original signatories. Since the U.S.A. had failed to ratify, and Germany and Russia were still outside, the League could not proceed to the exclusion of a State because it had resorted to dictatorship without reducing its Great Membership to three out of seven. This was clearly impossible. But it was perhaps an unnecessary departure from the spirit of the Covenant to admit a slave-owning State like Abyssinia (on the proposal of Italy and France and against the

ineffective opposition of Great Britain) — with ultimately very important consequences. It was only later, as dictatorships ousted parliaments over an ever-widening range of countries, that the change in the character of League membership took place. It is conceivable that a League of undemocratic States might have achieved many of the purposes of the original League — if those unfree systems had not been accompanied by aggressive foreign policies. But that condition was not fulfilled. And even if it had been, the character of the League, and its method of working, must have been very different from what had been originally contemplated.

It was difficult, if not impossible, for the founders of the League to foresee this reaction away from the democratic form of government. It is, therefore, idle to criticise the League's original constitution for being insufficiently selective. Looking back, it may appear that it would have been better to have made the first effort more *intensive* and less *extensive*; to have started with a nucleus of genuinely democratic States, of like outlook and traditions, and to have postponed any extension until the League was firmly founded on this narrow basis. But the superficially democratic appearance of the world in 1919, and the need to include all the victorious Allies in the new international organisation, explain sufficiently why such a course was not taken.

We shall see later the effects of the growth of the dictatorship systems. But it is well to recognise that, even in the early years of the League, the underlying political reality as regards many of the member States was different from what it was at the time believed to be; and that this was an important though hidden cause of the League's weakness.

#### “ *Union Now* ”

So much I had written before the publication of Mr. Clarence Streit's book, *Union Now*. Now that I have read



it I think it well to add a few comments. It will be evident from what I have said in this chapter, and still more in Chapter I of this Part, that I, like him, desire a form of world government which is based upon a greater surrender of national sovereignty than the "inter-State" constitution of the League of Nations, and that I was in favour of the latter because it seemed not only to embody as much limitation of sovereignty as it was possible to attain at the time but because it contained within itself the means of developing, and consolidating, further limitations and cessions of sovereignty as a developing world opinion made these possible ; so that in the end the way would be prepared for the final step of federation. This has been the aspect of the League of Nations, and this the ultimate goal, which, as far as I am concerned, has always had my deepest and ultimate loyalty, and I believe that the same is true of many of those who have been among the most ardent of the supporters of the League of Nations. For myself I stressed this side of the League, and, in a long argument based upon the experience of Allied co-operation in the war, defended the principle of proceeding step by step towards a more complete system in the first book I ever wrote, as early as 1922, *Allied Shipping Control; an Experiment in International Administration*, which concludes with the following comment :

The conception here presented is thus not that of a central super-Government. It may be that this will come. It may be that the central organ of the League will in time itself become possessed of executive power, which, within a wide and widening sphere, will override the powers of national Governments. It may even be that in future ages the world will find a single centre of legislative and executive authority by a process of development similar to that by which provinces have been united into kingdoms and kingdoms into Empires. Such direct power, however, if it comes, must be delegated, not usurped. It must grow by a natural process from the gradual union of the national authorities, and the increasing

harmony of their policies. It must not appear suddenly as a new, an alien, and a rival force. In the immediate future executive power can neither be seized from, nor is it to any very important extent likely to be delegated by, the national Governments. Looking at our problem, therefore, within the perhaps restricted range of an administrative vision, we must contemplate the League attaining its ends through the more humble methods of organisation here described. . . .

So gradually under this [the League] system all the forces which exist in the world to assist the development of policy in a direction which conduces to peace and the general welfare, as distinct from national advantage and international dispute, may be mobilised and brought to bear at the most vital and effective points of national administration. And a mechanism so constructed can never break under the strain of what it undertakes. It is elastic. It adjusts itself automatically to the possibilities of the moment. It gives expression in its most effective form to the real international feeling of the world. But there it stops. It does not attempt to impose by either superior force or administrative device the international policy of any minority upon the reluctant or resistant national Governments of the world.

I agree completely with Mr. Clarence Streit, as I have long done on this point with Lord Lothian and Mr. H. G. Wells, that what is ultimately needed is a form of international Government which will, on a few but essential matters (of which the most important are defence and the conditions under which international trade is carried on), take over the sovereign rights of separate States as the inter-State system of the League does not do.

The ultimate goal being the same, the question is one of method. Should we aim at proceeding step by step, or attempt a bold jump to our ultimate objective at once? Here we must all form the best judgement we can with such guidance as experience can give us. It will not do for Mr. Streit to say that the failure of the League has shown that it is based upon the wrong principle, and that the alternative course is the right one. For, in the first place, as I hope the preceding analysis of the League's

history has shown, the failures of the League have been due to an inadequate willingness to make the comparatively modest surrender of sovereignty which its efficient working required. Not only did the Governments cling to their powers, but in nearly every country, even of the fifteen Mr. Streit has especially in mind, the majority of people were more inclined to oppose any limitation to which the Governments might be disposed to accept than to urge them to agree to more. The moral surely is that those who tried to extend the cession of sovereignty by such proposals as the Geneva Protocol, before the limited cessions and commitments of the Covenant had been sufficiently rooted in public opinion, were trying to go too far and too quickly, and that a still more ambitious attempt would have been impossible. The League system was at one time near success and it only failed for the reasons described in these chapters, reasons which I suggest would at any stage have made the adoption of Mr. Streit's proposal much more difficult than what was needed to make the League successful. In the second place, if experience gives a doubtfully negative answer against the League system, it provides no positive encouragement for the practicability of Mr. Streit's proposal. When has a federal union ever been achieved between countries as different and as distant as Mr. Streit's fifteen? Experience, as he argues, may suggest that anything less than federation will be insufficient; but it surely suggests more strongly that we cannot expect to get so much as he desires at once.

Well, I confess that I am myself by temperament, and perhaps also with the professional bias of an official's experience, inclined to proceed to a difficult objective step by step rather than by a jump which seems too big for the strength available. But there are, of course, occasions when a jump is safer than a step, and when the very gravity of the peril may give us a sudden access of strength beyond what we thought we possessed. It may be so.

I will not argue further as to which method is better. What I wish to emphasise is, first, that the difference is one of method and not of ultimate objective, and secondly, that there is no reason why those who differ as to method should act, or regard each other, as antagonists. The common enemy is unlimited national sovereignty. If Mr. Streit and those who agree with him should make progress with their bold proposal, even to the extent of bringing in some only of his fifteen constituent members, I for my part should wholeheartedly rejoice; and, unless they have in the process been attacking the League system, their success will help and not hinder us in making a reality of the inter-State system as between those other States who cannot be induced to come into a federation. Conversely, if we who think there is a better prospect in the less ambitious method proceed to work for it, we too shall, by undermining the supports of unlimited sovereignty, be actually helping the "Union Now" movement in the case of the States between whom federation may be practicable — again on the condition that we are not provoked by attack into counter attack. It will be disastrous if, like the advocates of temperance and of teetotalism, we waste the strength we need for the common enemy upon attacking each other.

May I appeal to both the advocates of "Union Now" and the supporters of the League of Nations to refrain from the kind of controversy which will weaken both? Federation, its advocates will admit, cannot in any case be applicable to all States, and something less than federation is needed for the rest. Federation, League supporters may well admit, is preferable when it can be secured. Should we not then, in unison, press the campaign against unrestricted sovereignty, and at least postpone any fraternal dispute till we can better measure the world's response to the increased gravity of these days?

## CHAPTER V

### SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF TWO DECADES

It will be convenient at this point to insert a bare catalogue of the chief events of the twenty post-war years before proceeding to discuss their causes and significance.

In 1920 the U.S.A. Senate declined to ratify the Treaties, the Covenant and the Triple Pact. The League started on its career with this grave handicap, holding its first Assembly and establishing its offices at Geneva in the autumn of the same year. It rapidly created its mechanism and in the next few years carried through a successful work of reconstruction in Austria, Hungary, Greece and Bulgaria, while stopping several minor wars and achieving a partial, but only partial, success in 1923 by settling a conflict between Greece and the Italy of Mussolini (who had marched to Rome and set up the first of the dictatorships at the end of 1922). In the meantime Mr. Lloyd George's efforts to pave the way for a united Europe through the post-war "Summer Resort Conferences" failed at Cannes and Genoa. In 1923 France, under Poincaré, occupied the Ruhr on the pretext of a default in Germany's reparation payments. In 1924, however, the French elections brought in a Left Parliament in favour of conciliation with Germany; the Ruhr was evacuated and Poincaré was succeeded by Briand. The Dawes settlement of reparations, followed by a large loan to Germany, introduced a period of five years of comparative prosperity both for Germany and the world as a whole, reducing all political tensions. The pre-war financial and currency system seemed to have been soundly restored almost everywhere. In 1925 the improvement in the political situation reached its

culmination at Locarno ; and immediately afterwards the League achieved its most dramatic triumph in stopping the war between Greece and Bulgaria. At the same time (having assisted in restoring the world's financial and currency system) it started upon a long effort to lower and stabilise tariffs. In 1926, however, M. Poincaré was brought back in France to stabilise the franc, and, having succeeded, he supplanted M. Briand and gradually renewed his own foreign policy.

In 1927 the World Economic Conference gave a prospect, not destined to be realised, of success in the League's economic work. In 1928 the Kellogg-Briand Pact (the Pact of Paris) was signed and opened a period of increasing association of the U.S.A. with European affairs. In 1929, however, the world depression came and it was followed two years later by the world financial crisis, which drove all countries back to nationalism, increased political tensions everywhere and prepared the way for revolution in Germany. In the meantime Stresemann, the German apostle of reconciliation, had died, and the greatest success he had obtained, the evacuation of the Rhineland in 1930, five years before the Treaty date, failed to arrest the gathering discontent in Germany. In the autumn of 1931, and in the first months of 1932, Japan first invaded Manchuria and then attacked Shanghai. The League failed to arrest this invasion, in spite of the active co-operation of the U.S.A. in the early stages of the crisis, a co-operation which was rendered abortive partly by the failure of Sir John Simon and Mr. Stimson to work together. In the same year the Lausanne Conference almost abolished reparation payments, and an armaments arrangement with Germany, under Herr Brüning, came near to success. It failed, and Herr Brüning was dismissed by Hindenburg. Then in January 1933 Herr Hitler became Chancellor of the Reich and the Nazi Party came into power.

In 1934 Germany began an intensive rearmament, in

open breach of the Treaty of Versailles, and no steps were taken to stop her. In the spring of 1935 France and Great Britain established closer relations with Italy at the Stresa Conference, apparently with a tacit understanding that there should be no interference with Italian encroachments on Abyssinia. In the autumn, however, when Italy had shipped a quarter of a million troops to invade Abyssinia, Sir Samuel Hoare as British delegate at Geneva led the members of the League in a policy of opposing the invasion by sanctions. The invasion followed ; partial sanctions were imposed, but there was no stoppage of the most essential supply — oil. The Italians overran Abyssinia ; the Emperor fled ; the League Powers admitted defeat and abandoned the sanctions.

In March 1936 Germany carried out a military re-occupation of the Rhineland and began to re-fortify the demilitarised area without opposition. In July of the same year the civil war broke out in Spain and over the next thirty-three months the insurgent General Franco, who was aided, in spite of " non-intervention " agreements, by German and Italian arms and men which were increasingly dominant over any foreign aid available to the Spanish Government, slowly advanced and finally overcame the stubborn resistance of the Republicans.

In 1937 Japan began a new war against China, and had captured Shanghai and Nanking by the end of the year ; the Chinese Government, however, refused to submit and hostilities continued, spreading over an ever wider area. In March 1938, Germany, having vastly increased her strength by intensive rearmament, invaded Austria and added her to the German Reich without opposition. Czechoslovakia was thus encircled, and there followed a period of tension over the claims of the Sudeten German minority which were now backed by the full power of the Reich ; in September Germany threatened war, and France having virtually repudiated her treaty of

alliance, the Czechs were compelled to cede large tracts of territory to Germany and then to make complementary cessions to Poland and Hungary. Encouraged by the rout of Britain and France, the Japanese next proceeded to attack and capture Canton, thus isolating Britain's Far Eastern outpost of Hong Kong. The first month of 1939 saw the capture of Barcelona with Italian troops leading the military parade into the conquered city. With spring have come in a great spate of catastrophes : the final partition of Czechoslovakia between Germany and Hungary, the German annexation of Memel, the final triumph of Franco in Spain and the conquest in three days of Albania by Italy.

### *The Significance of these Events*

It is easy in the fatalistic mood induced by recent disillusionment to read the course of post-war history as an inevitable movement towards another war, retarded only by the exhaustion and immediate memories of the last great conflict and driven on by forces too strong to be more than temporarily arrested either by individual sets of statesmanship or by any form of collective action.

This, however, is a misreading of the actual movement of events since 1919. On a broad view of the last twenty years it is evident that there has been no constantly increasing accumulation of forces making for war as against a constantly diminishing resistance of those engaged in efforts to secure peace. As recently as 1930 those making for peace were definitely in the ascendant. The League had grown in authority, and was being supplemented by an increasingly effective co-operation with the U.S.A. as a signatory of the Kellogg Pact. A little further steady progress, and it seemed as if peace would be established on a sound foundation. Then, however, the trend turned again, mainly as a result, in the first instance, of the international financial crisis which



deepened and extended the economic depression.

At all times, however, till the last few years, the factors making for peace and war respectively have been so nearly balanced as to make it possible for any signal act of wisdom or folly in statesmanship to tip the scales. Whenever France and Britain acted together in making a wise concession not under menace, as in the evacuation of the Rhineland in 1930 five years before the Treaty date, or in the acceptance of equality in the Locarno agreements, the situation visibly improved, and America was drawn into closer co-operation. Wise policy always had its reward — but it was always too little and too late.

The crux of the League's problem — and it was the problem for all those States members whose action, whether in or out of the League, determined the course of events during the post-war years — was just this : Could Germany be so conciliated by political concessions, made by those who were still obviously strong enough to withhold them, that the German people would be content with their Weimar Republic and with a Government elected under it who were seeking appeasement and justice and satisfaction for grievances through membership of the League ?

The opportunity was lost, but by a narrow margin only. There were liberal forces in France, responding to those in Great Britain, which had a real sympathy for the democratic Germany of the Weimar Republic ; and these exercised their influence on policy even when power in Germany was passing into other hands, and which genuinely wished and worked for a policy of appeasement and conciliation.

The contest between the two policies proceeded with fluctuating fortunes, and the result was long uncertain. Poincaré was the protagonist of repression. As against Clemenceau he had urged the taking of the Rhineland from Germany. On succeeding to power he tried to organise a separatist movement in the Rhineland to

detach it from the Reich. When he failed he pressed for extreme and impossible reparations, not merely for their own sake but in order to have a pretext for the occupation of the Ruhr, where he hoped to destroy the industrial strength of Germany and make it impossible for her to regain the position of a Great Power.

Then came the swing to the Left, which proved how real were the liberal forces in France. The elections of 1924 were fought, to an extent unusual in French politics, on foreign policy. The electorate voted decisively against Poincaré-la-guerre and put in power a Parliament with a majority of the Left, pledged to insist upon a policy of conciliation. Briand was called to power and became the protagonist and personification of this policy. In 1924, therefore, it was not too soon after the war for France to put aside the passions of the war and turn to conciliation; and in 1924 it was not too late for such a policy to stabilise the Weimar Republic, to win the confidence of Germany and to forge a new unity of Europe. It was the year of hope, followed, as it then seemed, by the year of realisation in 1925.

For the new direction of policy received a reinforcement, which seemed likely to be decisive, in the Dawes Reparation Settlement and the Dawes Loan of 1924. The fertilising stream of foreign money into Germany brought comparative prosperity there after the miseries of inflation, apparently destroyed the discontents on which the Nazi Party had already been trying to build itself up, and rendered possible the policy of appeasement which Stresemann pursued faithfully to his death. True, there were hidden seeds of evil in the Dawes settlement, as there were latent forces of disruption both in France and Germany, but for five years they were scarcely visible, however easy it may be to see them in retrospect.

For a while all went well. The trio of statesmen, Briand, Stresemann and Austen Chamberlain, utilised the new and favourable factors to establish the foundation of

a true international system in the Locarno agreements of the autumn of 1925. The effect of these agreements, negotiated outside the League but consistent with its purpose, was at once felt by the League itself, which achieved its most dramatic triumph in the prompt and successful arrest of the war between Greece and Bulgaria. And then Germany entered the League.

It was the high-water mark. Soon afterwards the tide began to recede, but slowly and unevenly. For while there was, as we shall see, a set-back in Europe in the next few years, there was a very notable advance from the other side of the Atlantic which, had it not been for the deterioration on our side, might well have led on to the achievement of a truly universal League. In 1928 the Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed by almost all countries whether members of the League or not. It bound all signatories to a renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy. This was a pledge that might have meant much or little. But Mr. Stimson, with a steady consistency of policy and determination, proceeded to make it a reality. He intervened in its name in a border war between Russia and China. He showed a willingness, indeed an eagerness, to co-operate, not only with League members, but through and with the League organisation, in dealing with any problem in which the principles both of the Covenant and the Pact were involved. A few years of successful development upon these lines and the problem of achieving an effective and stable world order might have been solved. While progress from Locarno would have incorporated Germany in the League, progress from the Kellogg-Briand Pact would have united the world of nations inside and outside the League in a single system. If non-members had collaborated with League members at the meetings of the Council, and had then each followed up the policies there agreed upon, the habit would have grown — and the goal would have been reached. It would have mattered little whether the

U.S.A. had joined the League after a few years, or whether the League and the Kellogg-Briand Pact had functioned as two closely co-ordinated systems, or whether a new organisation embracing both of them under a new name had been set up. The desire of the world would at last have been attained.

It was not to be. The first set-back came from what was, in a sense, a tragic accident. In 1925 and 1926 the French were, with reason, very seriously disturbed at the rapid depreciation of the franc and the prospects of its further decline. The problem could only be dealt with by a man of great ability, energy and authority. Poincaré was clearly the man best suited to take the country through this financial crisis. He was brought into power for the purpose, and in 1926 he successfully restored the franc. His task was quickly done. But his indefatigable energy was anxious to turn to what was always first in his ambitions ; and the prestige of his success gave him the opportunity. His influence gradually undermined, and then destroyed, the policy and the power of Briand to make those concessions without which Stresemann could not maintain his hold against the gathering forces of discontent in Germany.

The history of post-war Europe could almost be written in terms of currency depreciation and deflation. It was the restoration of the franc in 1926 which enabled Poincaré to reverse the policy of Briand ; it was later the fears for sterling which brought in the National Government in Great Britain in 1931 ; and in Germany in the following year Herr Brüning's heroic effort to save the mark by drastic deflation added substantially to the discontents which caused his fall. But the first of these disasters was perhaps the most fatal, for it came at a real turning-point of history.

Briand's decline in political strength and its effect upon Stresemann, who was weakened also by the disease which was a little later to kill him, caused a gradual deterioration

of political conditions in Europe. But increasing American co-operation and the placating effects of comparative prosperity in Germany disguised for a while the deeper trend of events.

Then came the devastating effects of the world economic depression of 1929 and the world financial crisis of 1931. Every country was driven back to nationalism in policy and in popular outlook. And in Germany the mass unemployment and distress, added to the political grievances which had long existed but by themselves had not sufficed, at last created the conditions out of which the Nazi Party, so often hitherto defeated, snatched its victory.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE LEAGUE

LET us then, in a brief summary, review the change that has taken place in the League under the impact of these successive misfortunes. The change has come so gradually that in the process it has been almost invisible and it can only be seen clearly in retrospect. It has been further disguised because the reality has been hidden beneath an unmodified Covenant which for millions was not only the symbol of their creed but was sacred in the detail of its provisions, and beneath an imposing and for some time efficient League mechanism. The cumulative effect, however, of the changes that have been going on below the surface of the visible organisation, has been such as to transform profoundly both the character of the League, the general purpose to which it is directed, and the practicable conditions of its operation.

In its original conception the League was to be universal, at least in the sense of comprising all the most civilised and powerful countries. These countries, the constituent units of the "inter-State" system, would, it was hoped and believed, be governed through representative institutions enabling the general will of their respective peoples to be effective upon policy. They would be united in a general acceptance of the basic principles of the League, viz. that no country should resort to war except after a process of international deliberation, after a prescribed delay, and on certain narrowly restricted conditions ; and that each country should assist any other which might be attacked in breach of these engagements. In place of the bond of coincident national interests which unites allies in an alliance of the traditional type, the principle of union was

to be "friends are we with all, enemies are we of none, except of any who break the peace". If a League of Nations is a potential alliance, it is essentially an alliance against the *unknown* enemy. An association once firmly founded upon such principles, sincerely supported by those who might otherwise have been in opposite camps, and evoking loyalties sufficient to utilise, restrict, and if necessary override, the loyalties of national patriotism, might well hope to secure peace permanently. If a single country broke away; if, for example, a Pangalos should seize power in Greece and contemplate war against Bulgaria, the prospect of overwhelming opposition would deter him. And if a demonstration of collective determination were needed, the mere severance of economic intercourse by the collective prohibition of imports and exports would suffice. That was the initial conception. Of course, it was realised that such a system could hardly come into full operation at once. As a result of war passions, the League had to start in 1920 without the immediate membership of Germany and her associates. This, however, was envisaged as only a short intermediate stage. In the course of a few years, concerted policy of the U.S.A., Great Britain and France, together with the moderating influence of the ex-neutrals, might be expected to pave the way for the conciliation and willing co-operation of ex-enemies. The one obvious danger, the almost panic fear of France for the future, and the jealous resistance of the new, or newly enlarged, States to any form of conciliation threatening a revision of the *status quo*, was to be met first by a joint guarantee of France by the U.S.A. and Great Britain (the Triple Pact), and then by the combined influence of these two Powers upon French and League policy.

It was a reasonable anticipation. It was frustrated in the first instance by the abstention of the U.S.A. for reasons, and with results, which we have seen. At once, and of necessity, the character of the League began to change.

The internal balance of power and influence was fatally altered, and as a consequence, the League became identified with the conservation of the *status quo*. The influences which might have incorporated Germany as a loyal member State under a free and democratic Government were, with the handicap of America's absence, insufficient, though by a narrow margin.

We have seen the gradual change within the League. But it was only with the definite departure of Germany, and the establishment of the Nazi régime, that the decisive—if not necessarily permanent—transformation in its character took place.

It no longer had any prospect, in any foreseeable future, of having a genuinely "collective" character of a true international system as originally conceived. The essential requirement of such a system is not that it should be "universal" (it might well function in only one region of the world), but that it should comprise in a single membership, loyal to the central principles, countries which would otherwise, under the ordinary interaction of national interests and jealousies, have been hostile to one another. Thus Locarno, while rigorously limited, was an example of a true collective system in miniature. It was much more truly an instalment of the League as originally conceived than the later League, with its much wider membership, but without Germany, Italy and Japan.

### *Defensive Alliance*

From the moment these Powers were definitely outside it, the League was of necessity converted from a genuine international system into an alliance. A defensive alliance, it is true, based upon and subject to the provisions of the Covenant, supported by all the loyalties remaining to the League, but none the less essentially an alliance. It was a combination of some known, and some doubtful, adherents against definitely known potential aggressors; and it com-



manded collective strength which was doubtfully sufficient to deter, or even to defeat, the attack of the opposed combination.

This is the new form into which the League has been forced by the events which have been described. It may still serve an essential purpose for those comprised within it better than any alternative form of alliance open to them, and it has indeed for that purpose some very obvious advantages which we shall consider in a moment. But it has for the time become in its main essentials something very different from the League as originally conceived.

In its new form the system, still named the "League of Nations" or "collective security", and deriving its legal basis and mode of action from the Covenant, gained, to set against its losses, new support and sources of strength.

The determining force in enlisting these new supporters was of course the challenge from the Fascist dictatorships. We may note four aspects of this challenge, each of which at once brought new support to the League and at the same time tended to change its character.

The latter not only threatened aggression and thus brought into association those who remained loyal to the essential purpose of the League; they also represented a militant challenge of the Right against the Left. At once the League found itself supported more genuinely and much more passionately than before by the forces of the Left in the remaining free countries. The British Labour Party, for example, sincerely supported the League before the days of Herr Hitler, under the lead of Arthur Henderson and a number of others who worked for it at Geneva; but this policy was not then so enthusiastically endorsed by the rank and file, especially on the extreme Left, as it is now. No one can fail to see that in the last few years the support has increased both in extent and ardour, and at the same time has somewhat changed in character, since it is not only peace that is threatened by Fascism but also all the causes of the Left.

Secondly, it is not merely the Left in general that Fascism threatens. Communism is its special enemy. Fascism is based largely upon the fear of Communism, and nourishes itself on the opposition to it. Germany, Italy and Japan with their lesser associates, Spain and Hungary, have banded themselves together in the Anti-Comintern Pact. In addition, historical enmities and present ambitions for territorial expansion make a rearmed Germany specially menacing to Russia. It is natural, therefore, that Russia, whose earlier attitude to the League had been one of bitter opposition to "the imperialist robbers' den", should, when confronted by this threat, have seen in the League a useful form of association with Western Powers. This aim was a perfectly legitimate motive for entering the League. Yet the entry of so powerful a State, based upon an economic and political system which so many countries both in the League and outside consider a danger to their own institutions, has necessarily changed the character of the League, both directly through Russian influence, and indirectly by reactions upon the internal politics of other member States.

In the third place Fascism is also, of course, a challenge to democracies and free institutions, apart from any question of Right or Left. All therefore who value political freedom tend to draw together in resistance, and the fact that Fascism threatens both liberalism and socialism alike makes the League a convenient link between the democracies and Russia.

Nor is this all. As the strength of the Fascist Powers increases, it obviously presents a graver menace to the integrity of the British Empire, and even to the independence of Great Britain, than any with which we have been threatened in modern times. In these circumstances it has become evident to the more intelligent of British imperialist patriots that Great Britain either alone, or even in alliance with France, may well be too weak to withstand assault, and that the League is a convenient

basis for a wider system of alliances. They see that the League, if it can be reconstructed, will be, not merely a beneficent and useful institution through which we might help to prevent wars between other countries, but an integral and indispensable part of our own national defence. Mr. Winston Churchill is the greatest and most influential of this section of League supporters. His record in the years immediately after the war makes him a strange bed-fellow for Stalin and Litvinov. His attitude towards India and some other imperial questions would in ordinary circumstances make him an unexpected associate of most of the earlier supporters of the League. He essentially represents the British imperialist and nationalist tradition. But he had the strategic vision to see quickly, what others are now beginning to see, that Great Britain alone, or even allied with France, is very imperfectly secured against the German menace. In considering that British membership of the League should be a means of increasing the defensive strength of Great Britain, and not merely a semi-philanthropic attempt to protect remote victims of aggression, Mr. Churchill is obviously right. It was, as we have seen, the great defect of the British attitude to the League in its early years that it was not based on this conception. Mr. Churchill could in those pre-Locarno years have rendered an inestimable service by remedying this defect. But his temperament perhaps made the League of Nations less congenial to him in the period when it seemed likely to absorb Germany into a true international system than now when it provides him with the framework of an alliance against an opposing coalition. At the same time, though he did not until recently conceive his policy in terms of the Covenant, Mr. Churchill has always had a magnanimity of outlook which would probably have ensured the success of the League if it had been more general. If he desires always *debellare superbos*, he desires no less *parcere subjectis*. If he would have deferred a reduction of armaments until we had conciliated

Germany, he would neither have hesitated nor delayed in the conciliation. If his adhesion to the League idea was tardy, it is not the less sincere ; and if his conception of it as a defensive alliance against Germany is very different from the original conception of the Covenant-makers, it is one which, it may be reasonably argued, is imposed by the facts of the present situation.

Mr. Lloyd George, in spite of the difference in his earlier record and outlook in regard to imperial questions, now brings into League problems an influence which is very similar to that of Mr. Churchill. He was Prime Minister at the time of Great Britain's greatest strength. In 1919 he commanded the greatest force in the world, and from 1920 until the failure of the Genoa Conference in 1922, he was incomparably the greatest figure in European, and indeed in world, affairs. Embodying the power of Great Britain, he represented also the magnanimous British tradition in the use of that power. Though fatally handicapped by the disastrous 1918 Parliament, which his brief but fatal lapse from greatness in the November of that year had called into being, he struggled with superhuman strength and skill for reconciliation in Europe till his great French antagonist, Poincaré, defeated him at Cannes and Genoa. Like Mr. Churchill he has watched, with increasing apprehension, humiliation and indignation, the decline of British power in the last seven years, and like him he has realised how the League system could have been utilised to preserve Great Britain from the advance of the dictatorships. And like Mr. Churchill he advocates the use of the " collective system " as the means of forming a defensive alliance against the Axis Powers.

The present support behind the use of the collective system as the basis of foreign and defence policy is therefore diverse, and largely novel in character. Herr Hitler's régime is a challenge to communism and the Soviet Union ; to the Labour movement and trades unionism ;

to free, representative institutions ; to Great Britain's position in the world, her influence in Europe, perhaps even her independence. In addition it is a challenge also to the League of Nations and its essential principles. All the challenges are summed up in the threat of armed aggression. And this common feature affords a link to bind together those who would otherwise find it difficult to unite. On this basis the Left can unite with Conservative imperialists ; Communists with democrats ; Liberals with the dictatorship of Stalin ; Imperialists with little Englanders.

The principal advocates in Great Britain of the use of the Covenant's methods and provisions in dealing with our present dangers are Mr. Churchill, to whom the League was in its earliest phase an unwelcome alternative to a magnanimous Pax Britannica ; Mr. Lloyd George, to whom it was at first a means of Anglo-American co-operation which suddenly became an obstacle instead of a help ; and Lord Cecil, an equally ardent supporter in both the earlier and the later periods. And outside this country the chief advocate in recent years has been Stalin through his representative, Litvinov. Lord Cecil could hardly have imagined ten years ago so unlikely a quartet of League supporters as one consisting of himself, Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Lloyd George and the Communist Dictator.

^ The fact that the League has changed in the way I have described, and that it now derives so much of its support from such sources, does not, of course, mean that it has ceased to be the most desirable basis of our foreign policy. But certain consequences do follow. We can no longer take the Covenant and its text as a verbally inspired gospel capable of serving as a guide to conduct in all circumstances. Granting that those who framed it were supremely wise in their provisions for the functioning of the League in the environment which they anticipated, we cannot assume that the same provisions are necessarily applicable

in the different circumstances of the present time. For many years those who had understood the main conception of the League, were convinced that it was the right basis of policy, and had come to admire the wisdom, skill and prudence of its elaborate yet elastic provisions, could reasonably find in it not only a general guide to conduct but a criterion by which to decide almost automatically the rightness of policy on each current issue. This is so no longer. We must examine carefully and realistically the applicability of the League's provisions to the problems of the present, and do so without prejudice from our hopes and desires.

The Covenant of the League has won, and deserved to win, the kind of reverence and loyalty which attach to a religion. But its detailed provisions are essentially temporal, adjusted to certain conditions at a given time and cease to be applicable when those conditions no longer exist. It is one of the most difficult and most painful things in the world to re-examine, and if need be to modify, a creed which for long has seemed to give a sufficient and infallible guide to action, but there are times when it is essential to do so. And the changes in the political environment of the League, and consequently in its character, which have been described, are such that a re-examination of the conditions under which its precise provisions can, and cannot, be applied, is now necessary.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PATH BACK TO COLLECTIVE SECURITY

I HAVE discussed at length the principle of collective security and the conditions upon which it depends. If it is to function as originally intended, it is necessary that those loyal to it should be collectively stronger, reckoning both military resources and political determination, than any opposed alliance.

The provisions of the Covenant are all based upon the assumption that this condition can be satisfied. No League supporters would, I suppose, have ever denied in theory that, at some times and in relation to some issues, it might be unobtainable. It seemed obvious to them, however, that for many years this condition, at least as regards European issues, was or could have been satisfied, but that nevertheless the whole international situation was being allowed to deteriorate by a failure to utilise the provision of the Covenant. In such circumstances it has naturally been very difficult for them to consider coolly and objectively whether, in regard to a particular issue, the fatal point had been reached and passed. They have had the strongest possible inducement to wishful thinking — to overestimate the resources at the disposal of collective defence and to depreciate the strength of the opposing camp.

But painful and difficult as the task may be, it is the duty of all of us to face the actual facts of the present position without allowing our judgement to be distorted by desires or regrets. The transformation of the League during the last twenty years and the deterioration of the international situation since 1930 are real facts. These facts, and the present alignments of physical force, must

be taken into account in choosing the policy which is most likely to avert a major war and to restore gradually the conditions within which it may be possible to rebuild a true League system.

We have tried in earlier chapters to describe and analyse these conditions. We have now to ask what conclusions we must draw as to the policy we may now best pursue, and the prospects and methods of attempting to retrieve security and place it upon a stable basis.

We have already seen that any defensive association which is now possible, or has been for some years, must in any case be different in one very important feature from the League as it was at first conceived, and as it seemed likely to become when Germany entered it in 1926. It will be an association for defence against specified assailants, not a system which comprises potential friends and foes on equal terms and unites the whole association against the possible but unknown aggressor in its midst. It cannot at present be either the universal League which was anticipated in 1919, or such a League in miniature as was represented by the Locarno Treaties, which were in conformity with the inclusive principle, and were thus not an alternative to the League, but a nucleus of strength within it. What we have to contemplate now is a defensive pact, or perhaps a series of such pacts with different though sometimes overlapping contractants, after the manner of the defensive alliances of pre-war times. There is the difference that the parties may find an additional bond in having been associated in a wider system, and in the moral support which is given by the fact that they remain true to the principles of that system while those against whom they are joining are States which belonged to the same system but have repudiated it. They may hope, moreover, from the provisional and partial arrangements of the moment, to move towards a wider collective security.

The second conclusion is that it is improbable a union



can be formed with enough collective strength to *compel* the Axis Powers to come back into the system they have left. We may be unable to impose an effective restraint upon any and every act of armed expansion; and it may be that the best to hope for is to establish such an equipoise of strength and deterrents as will keep such acts within tolerable limits without a general war. Even this will be a difficult goal to attain, and we shall need every possible aid to our diplomacy in essaying it. This is a further reason in support of the policy advocated later in this book of combining with physical strength the appeal of a broad and magnanimous peace policy which may both attract the aid of countries not directly menaced and penetrate the will to aggression of large sections of the people of the Axis countries.

The situation described in the preceding paragraph did not arise with the departure of Germany from the League. For the States that remained had a collective strength — if they had been willing to use it — which would have enabled them to remain masters of the situation and re-establish a true collective system. In time they would probably have brought back those who had broken away, or at any rate they would have had a sure protection against them. When did the turning point come? Here there is room for some reasonable difference of opinion. In retrospect I find it difficult to contend that the strength to make "collective security" work by simply taking the straightforward League course, at least in all issues in which European States were parties, was not available at any time up to the advent of the Nazi régime; and equally difficult to contend that it has been available for use by this simple method since September 1938. Within these past six years we may choose our own point of time and agree to differ, for the precise moment of the change is of less importance than the present fact. I will give my own opinion, for what it is worth, that the turning point came (after we had already allowed Germany to begin

rearmament on a large scale, and after we had first applied partial sanctions against Italy, and then shrunk from adding the oil sanction) in 1936, the year in which Germany entered the demilitarised Rhineland in March 1936 with no more than a verbal protest. Up to 1936 we could have reasserted and re-established collective security, for German rearmament was in its early stages, and trust in the League system could have been restored by success. After that I believe we were fated to become restricted in the sense I have explained to a partly "opportunistic", as distinct from a straight, League policy.

This does not of course mean that we have no longer any means of securing a united action sufficient to avert general war without intolerable surrenders, nor does it mean that we cannot in time work back to a true peace system. But it does mean, I believe, that we shall be forced to negotiate under conditions and by methods very different from those which we should choose, and which were available to us a few years ago ; that we shall have to accept some things we should resist if we were collectively more powerful ; and that we shall have to proceed painfully, and by a very distasteful and dangerous route, towards the re-establishment of a more enduring basis of peace.

We are for example, as I write, discussing separate defensive pacts. We have made one with Poland, in conjunction with France, who was already her ally ; and we are now extending guarantees to Greece and Rumania. So far the action has been bilateral, or rather trilateral, not multilateral, still less universal in the League sense. This means, for instance, that if we conclude several other of such pacts and the *casus foederis* were to arise in respect of one of them, the other States would not be under a treaty obligation to come to our aid. Thus the total strength available to all the signatories might be sufficient if all of it were employed, and yet the combination might be too weak in a particular case — though it is of course

possible, and perhaps probable, that signatories of the other pacts would in fact come in on our side. It is obviously desirable, therefore, as far as possible, to multi-lateralise any pacts to which we may become parties. It is also clear that we must in each case weigh with the greatest care, with both courage and calculation, the advantages and the liabilities attaching to each particular proposal. No course is now without grave risks and we must be prepared to take them where, on balance, the result is likely to be worth the cost. But the scales must be held true and the weights given their true value. The most skilful diplomacy is of course needed in the negotiations and a full knowledge of all the factors involved. And we must not expect that those against us will leave the initiative in our hands for long without an attempt to wrest it from us.

It is obvious that no recommendations can be made here as to what specific arrangements should be made. Their merits must depend upon the changing events of each day that passes and the whole environment created by the attitude of other States towards each particular proposal. Nor are critics outside the Government likely to be able to intervene usefully in any actual crisis, for some of the essential factors will at such a time be unknown to them. We are perforce obliged to trust the Government — which is a further reason why we must have a Government which we can trust.

Let us suppose that we are more successful than at present seems probable in averting war by these means. What is to be the immediate future of the League of Nations? As between present members its machinery may prove useful to facilitate some of their reciprocal arrangements, and it is in any case valuable that the specific pacts should be related to the Covenant, and declared to be based upon its principles. But it is obvious that the main diplomatic negotiations on the great questions of controversy must take place outside the League and without the

use of its machinery. In an issue between a Great Power which has left the League and one which remains a Member it is futile to say that it should be dealt with by the Council through the League mechanism. It cannot, and will not, be so dealt with ; and we have no power to compel it to be. Diplomacy on such issues must proceed by the methods which would have been used if there were no League. All we can do is to see that in the conduct of the negotiations we utilise any influence available to us through League membership ; that, as far as possible, the principles of the Covenant should be followed ; and that every opportunity should be taken, in securing a settlement of a particular issue, to help to re-create the political conditions under which a true League system may later function again. It is hopeless to expect, as long as four of the seven Great Powers are outside the League, and three of the four definitely hostile to it, that the main course of diplomacy can be brought within it. Geneva is, for the time being, no longer the metropolis but a suburb.

I have spoken of "re-creating the political conditions under which the League system may function again". Let me state quite clearly what I mean. I do not mean the establishment of such political relations, combined with military strength, between League members as will compel the Fascist countries to accept League methods and decisions. It follows from the general argument in this chapter that I do not believe this to be now possible. I mean the gradual establishment (with the aid of the united strength of ourselves and our allies) of such relations with the Fascist countries, or the more important of them, as may later result in their voluntary re-entry into the League or their acceptance of some similar system. That might come by a change of the policy of the existing régimes as an ultimate result of such a policy of combined strength and conciliation as forms the theme of this book. It may happen as a result of an internal change in these systems. In either case a collective system can again

work. It may, of course, not happen at all. In that case a true collective system, as envisaged in the Covenant, cannot in my opinion function, unless it is rebuilt — as ultimately some form of international order must be — out of the chaos that follows a great war. That is the crux of the issue that this chapter is discussing. A League without the three great dictator countries cannot function as a true collective system. It may serve as a help, to a defensive alliance by making the common principle defence against aggression. But that is something very different. A true League system, as originally conceived, can only function when the principal potential antagonists are comprised within it.

What we now need, if we are ever to rebuild the League, is thus to re-create — in much more difficult circumstances — the political conditions under which such a collective system can function. In the meantime, while these conditions do not exist, to attempt an amendment of the text of the Covenant is not only useless but undesirable. If it were now adapted to existing political conditions there would be hardly any reality left in the League at all. It would be reduced to an insignificant organisation for arranging occasional conferences and carrying on some non-controversial technical work. In that case, even if the political conditions necessary for a true League system were later restored, the instrument would have been destroyed. Alternatively, an attempt to make only minor changes, which would make it a rather more efficient instrument for hypothetical future conditions, would be difficult and misleading and would divert attention from more immediately useful tasks.

I shall not, therefore, now discuss any of the suggested changes in the Covenant of the League, though I think some changes could and should be made when the time comes for the League's main political work to be resumed.

For the present I think our course of action in regard to the League is clear. We should recognise the fact that

main negotiations must take place outside the League, and that a method which would have been right in relation to one issue in 1935 may be wrong, and dangerously wrong, in relation to other issues, under different conditions, in 1939. We should, however, keep the League organisation active and efficient by developing to the utmost the useful work which it can still continue, on social, economic and financial, and labour questions. We should, moreover, realise that no creed embodying an ultimate ideal, such as that contained in the Covenant, can in present circumstances give us an infallible criterion to test and determine our action in each issue as it presents itself. Rigidly to oppose every act inconsistent with the Covenant, or to refuse any relations with the Axis dictators except those of uncompromising hostility, would inevitably, in the actual political and strategic conditions, involve immediate war on a large scale with no very good prospects of achieving both victory and a result worth the price.

Before I conclude, I must consider a little more closely the way in which we should proceed to build up a new system of collective defence from the present mutual-aid pacts. It is not enough to turn our eyes from time to time from the anxieties of the moment to our distant goal. We must try to see what lies between. A true world system must be the child of both idealism and realism. In 1919 the danger of another general conflict was remote. Peace was assured by the overwhelming but, in the sense we have indicated, the invisible strength of France and her Allies. Consequently the framers of the Covenant, and those who afterwards constructed the mechanism of the League, were without any sense of imminent danger. They were able to work upon a system of legal engagements without having to calculate the relative military strength of different countries at every moment. There was just enough difficulty in dealing with current disputes and securing agreement to new

conventions to disguise from their consciousness the fact that the real basis of peace during this period was still mainly the unchallengeable power of two great Members of the League. The proportion of realism was too little, and that of idealism too great, in much of the apparent progress in constructing the new system. Our danger now is precisely the opposite. We are dominated by the imminent menace. We are compelled in every step we take to consider first the strategic factors involved. We search for a country which has a good harbour, or a vital war material, or an easy and a geographical situation, which will be a useful asset in a military combination. All this is necessary. We cannot avoid it. But we should not allow it to dominate our minds to the exclusion of everything else. We should search not only for the countries which have good military bases, but also for the countries which have the political traditions and outlook which will make them valuable elements in the new system we are constructing and — when the strategic conditions permit it — try to associate such countries with us. Then, as I have already suggested, we should try always to “multilateralise” our pacts. But this is not to “universalise” them. We must think first of regions within Europe (though with such help from outside as is possible) and then of a European system (though in relation to a wider and looser world association or in close co-ordination with another system elsewhere). As matters are now developing, a Pan-American system under the leadership of the U.S.A. is likely to keep the peace of the American continent and we should regard this, not as a rival but as a complement to our own European efforts. In general, in all that we are doing we should attempt a true marriage between the real and the ideal. In Emerson’s violent metaphor, we must “hitch our wagon to a star”. Twenty years ago we looked too much at the star and failed to see when the wagon was in danger of falling into a ditch. Now we may be so concerned with getting it out of the

ditch that we forget where we want to take it afterwards.

In thus steadfastly attempting to re-establish an international order, we shall not only promote internal unity and find an incentive for our personal efforts, we shall also rally the greatest possible measure of support on our side. The President of the U.S.A., for example, has just taken a most important initiative in the European problem. If America is rebuffed, will she step back or step forward? Let us never forget that the superiority of collective strength upon which the combined defence of international order depends would be available if the might of America were included in it. There are several alternative methods by which America could proceed, if she decided to step forward and not back. She could, for example, develop the positive side of the Kellogg Pact, as Mr. Stimson had begun to. Or she could plainly indicate that her economic resources would be available to those who resisted an aggression which America had attempted to prevent. In either case the result might be attained and the path cleared for the reconstitution of an international order. Let us at least do what we can to increase the chances.

We must then keep as our ultimate goal either the restoration of the League, or the construction of some other form of international collective system, holding firmly to the principle that peace must at best be precarious until we can find some method of achieving both collective defence and, what is equally important, revision of treaties by collective negotiation. And we must make this ultimate goal a reality both to ourselves and to others by supporting every form of practicable international action and by seizing every opportunity to restore the conditions under which its range can be extended. For without such an ultimate goal always clearly before us we shall be unable to sustain the vigour required to meet our present trials and to choose the path, whenever we have any liberty of choice, which will lead us a little nearer to permanent peace and international order.



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PART III

NATIONAL STRENGTH



## CHAPTER I

### THE STRATEGY OF BRITISH REARMAMENT

THE earlier parts of this book have shown the strategic and military strength of the Axis Powers, and the gravity of the menace which they present to the democracies. It is a menace which must be met by a combination of methods. The threatened Powers must act together with the same effective unity as those who oppose them. They must develop and make known a constructive policy which will both rally their friends and, if possible, reduce the will to aggression in the peoples of the Axis countries. Proposals to this end are made elsewhere in this book. But it is evident that, whatever efforts are made in these directions, they cannot be successful unless the countries directly threatened, of whom the greatest are Great Britain and France, increase their own defensive strength to the maximum which their resources make possible. We must now consider what steps Great Britain could, and should, take to this end.

As a preface to this discussion I do not need to attempt any exact estimate of the present strength of our forces. Such an estimate would in any case be very difficult for a layman, and in addition it could hardly be made without some danger of disclosing information which, in present circumstances, it is better not to make public. It is enough to start with the assumption, which is patently correct, that the utmost possible effort is necessary. Nor shall I, in any suggestion I make, venture as a layman into the field of the more technical problems of the fighting services. I shall confine myself to what falls within the scope of civilian administration, in which I may claim some experience.

But, even within these limitations, there is much that can and needs to be said. It is indeed in matters upon which a civilian is competent to judge that our deficiencies have apparently been most serious and most dangerous.

A few preliminary observations are desirable. I am anxious to urge that certain important changes should be made both in organisation and in personnel. To make my case I must emphasise some of the deficiencies of our defensive preparations. As, however, a precise statement of the position at this moment, even if I possessed all the requisite information to make it, would be open to certain objections, I shall base my argument mainly upon the known facts of the period up to last autumn, with a few comments upon what has taken place since then. This is enough for my purpose, seeing that the methods of organisation of that time which I select for special criticism have not yet been replaced, and that the responsible personnel is also much the same. Before commenting on the position of last autumn, however, it is right to remark that the actual strength of our defensive preparations, especially where they were then weakest, is now much greater. In spite of inadequate methods and policy, the resources of the country, both in industrial capacity and in personal effort, have shown much greater results in recent months. It is indeed always necessary, in looking at the effort of a country from the point of view of its governmental organisation, to beware of underestimating the extent to which industrial resources make their strength tell in spite of handicaps due to misdirection from above. I remember visiting the U.S.A. in the summer of 1917, shortly after that country's entry into the war. By that time the war organisation in Great Britain was already highly developed, and, with this in mind, I was greatly disappointed by the apparent confusion in the new organisation which had been hastily improvised to meet the new needs of war. I quickly

realised, however, that under the surface confusion immense results were being obtained which were altogether in excess of anything that would have been inferred by one whose observation was concentrated upon central direction. The adaptation of a free economic system to a war effort is a slow and cumbrous process. But once begun it proceeds with a gathering momentum. We have now started, too slowly and with many remediable defects in our methods. But recent months have demonstrated the great potential resources of the country as unmistakably as the reform in methods which is still needed if they are quickly to be fully realised.

With this preface it is possible to state, without fear of misunderstanding or contradiction, that the perspective and proportion of our rearmament programme, as it was planned two years ago, were in some respects seriously mistaken.

Our greatest strategic weakness was obviously in our defence against air attack. The fate of the British Empire was more likely to be decided at the centre than at the periphery, and the first and most urgent necessity was therefore to repair our inferiority in the air. In particular, the vulnerability of London and the great cities, of the docks and munitions areas, offered a temptation to an aggressive country to gamble on a knock-out blow and, whatever our long-term strength, might thus precipitate a war that would otherwise have been avoided. An enormous increase in the Air Force ; the utmost possible acceleration of local defence against bombing aeroplanes by anti-aircraft guns of the most efficient type, by balloon barrages, etc. ; an intensive effort to protect the civilian population by shelters and evacuation, and the provision of reserves of food and raw material to offset the reduction of our imports under war conditions, were obviously most urgently required. The new estimates, however, which were to be financed with the aid both of additional taxation and of loans, did not provide an allocation of resources

proportionate to these necessities of this new strategic position. That indeed is abundantly proved by the changes that have since been made. The general conception of our relative needs which is already implied in the present estimates is a very different one, even though the correction of our original error is, as we shall see, in some important respects still inadequate. The facts already known in 1937 were at least such as to require as great a proportionate allocation to the air menace at that time as the present programme does. That it did not do so indicates a serious defect in the organisation responsible for the main planning of strategy. I do not think that any objective and well-informed person will deny that this is a moderate and accurate statement, if indeed it is not an understatement.

However, then, the responsibility is to be assigned, it is, I think, beyond question that the Government in the broadest sense, as including the whole administrative machine, failed in the first task which was involved in a new armaments effort to meet a new danger, that of getting the perspective and proportions right. The Cabinet, the Committee of Imperial Defence and the new Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence together did not secure an allocation of our resources, in money, in industrial technique, in men and in ability, that was proportionate to the real needs of our new strategic position.

### *The Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence*

What is the explanation of this lack of perspective? In part it was doubtless due to a failure, by Ministers, their advisers and the public alike, to realise the extent to which our island immunity, under the shield of the Navy, has been destroyed by the new instruments of warfare. But defects in our administrative organisation must bear a main share of the responsibility. The public generally hoped that the appointment of a new Minister

for the Co-ordination of Defence was designed to secure the right allocation of our resources to our different needs. In this respect, however, some injustice has perhaps been done to the first holder of the office by the attribution to him of a responsibility which he was not intended to bear, and which he certainly never discharged.

We need to consider the circumstances in which he was appointed by Mr. (now Lord) Baldwin in 1936. For some years there had been a strong movement for the appointment of a Minister of Defence who should have a primary responsibility both for co-ordinating the work of the fighting services and for framing the main strategy of our defensive preparations. The Service Departments disliked the proposal intensely. Each of them was jealous of its powers and its autonomy. They pointed out that the Committee of Imperial Defence, with the Prime Minister as its Chairman, with the Ministers of the Service Departments and their Chiefs of Staff among its members, and with its network of subordinate committees, had been designed to devise general strategy and to co-ordinate the different services, and they urged that it was adequate to the task.

### *The Committee of Imperial Defence*

Those who pressed for a Minister of Defence disagreed, for a reason which goes to the root of the defect of our defensive strategy. The C.I.D., they pointed out, was only a combination of the Departments, with all their separate traditions and specialised preoccupations. The Prime Minister, overburdened with other duties and without access to other specialist advice, could not effectively control such a body or correct any errors in its perspective. The strategy that emerged would be the sum of the strategical conceptions of the Departments or some compromise between them. Now a Department, and each section or branch of a Department, is organised, and its staff scheme and hierarchy of personnel is arranged in

accordance with what seem to be the tasks of that service at the time it is created. Each cell of an Office so formed becomes a nucleus of experience, interest and power, whose outlook and ideas are determined by its specialised duty. As new needs arise, as submarines or tanks or other implements of war appear, new branches may be added. But each innovation encounters the natural human prejudice of those whose training has been in, and whose position depends upon, an older arm of the service whose future is threatened. The new branch is therefore slow to be created and is likely to be inferior in prestige to the older branches. Thus, at any given moment the personnel and organisation of a fighting Department usually reflects, in its relative proportion and prestige, the methods of warfare of the last war rather than those of the next. If new inventions come slowly, if a submarine comes gradually within the ken of the sailors over twenty years before it assumes a primary importance in naval warfare, the adjustments may be made without any intolerable distortion of perspective and strategy. But at the best, the adaptation will be slow and the whole weight of the older branches of the Office will load the scales against them. And if a new arm comes to the fore rapidly; if it creates new conditions of warfare and radically changes the conditions under which major strategy must be formed, it is very unlikely that a great and ancient Department will adapt itself in time. The policy, the strategy of a Department, is the crystallisation of the opinions of its specialised personnel, of which those concerned with the new arm will be the smallest in numbers and the least influential. The combined force of departmental opinion so originating and so supported is too great for any professional officer living in the Department and its traditions to escape its controlling influence. And the strategy of a body like the C.I.D., composed essentially of the Service Departments, and with no effective personal influence to correct its perspective, will be the sum of these traditions and



prejudices. Above all, this will be the case if, like the aeroplane, the new instrument of war not only transforms the conditions under which a single service must prepare its strategy, but transcends the limits between them and affects them all alike. There is then very little chance that the strategy and main proportions of the scheme of financial provision will give an adequate place to the late arrival. Each Department, and each section of a Department, will obtain a financial provision, an allocation of resources and of personnel, which corresponds with its influence and prestige, that is, as a rule, with its record in the last war, and the newcomer will be given a grudging, gradually increasing, but always inadequate share. So it was feared ; so it has proved.

This was the dilemma presented to Mr. Baldwin. He disliked a radical reform. He wished to avoid trouble with the fighting Departments. He wished to interpose a buffer between himself and those who were pressing for a Minister of Defence. To do this he must therefore create an office with a name that seemed to promise something of what was asked, and entrust it with functions that bore some resemblance to those his critics said were necessary. There, however, was one respect in which the existing organisation did indeed cause him some trouble ; for sometimes the Services did not agree among themselves. They disputed, for example, as to who should control the aeroplanes that must work with the Navy. An arbitrator at least would therefore save, not cause, him trouble. It was in the cases in which the Departments agreed that he would be creating trouble for himself if he appointed some new authority who tried to override them.

Out of these complex anxieties Mr. Baldwin, or someone whose advice he accepted, devised the conception, not of a Minister of Defence but a Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence ; of an arbitrator, not an overriding authority. If he were given no staff, the Departments need not fear him. If he were an impressive parliamentary

figure, he would draw the lightning of parliamentary criticism. And how convenient he might be for other purposes too ! There were some who were pressing for a Ministry of Supply ; and others who were even urging the uncomfortable demand that somebody should be responsible for providing food reserves to compensate for a reduction of imports in a long conflict. Why not assign both tasks to the same Minister, who, if he had no staff, was not likely to be troublesome and, if suitably chosen, would be content not to be ?

We shall see in a later chapter how skilful was the selection of Sir Thomas Inskip for the new office, if this was the purpose for which it was designed. It is enough at this point to remark that the main responsibility for the strategy of our defensive preparations continued to rest with the Committee of Imperial Defence, whose constitution has already been described. The subordinate network of committees set up under this main Committee may have done much useful work in detail, though so far as it has touched civilian organisation, and the results have become public, the signs are not encouraging. But there can be no doubt that in its main task of 1937, that of devising, and imposing throughout our defensive preparations, a strategy appropriate to the menace presented by the German Air Force, it was seriously at fault.

Each fighting service competed for finance and resources with a success that was proportionate to its prestige, and to the importance it had acquired before the air menace became the first of our dangers. And what was true as between the services was equally true as between different branches within them. Large branches which had acquired prestige over a long period in dealing with an arm of the service which was once relatively more important had an advantage over a newly formed branch dealing with a new instrument of war.

*Professional Departmentalism*

The importance of this professional departmentalism in determining the actual allocation of our resources is greater than anyone who is not closely acquainted with the Government machine can well recognise. If we ask why, in the first allocation of the additional resources, the Air Ministry did not get more, the true answer is that it is the youngest of the great fighting services. If we ask why the construction of modern anti-aircraft guns was so slow and inadequate, the answer is that the responsibility for ground defence against aircraft was new to the War Office and reluctantly accepted, and those entrusted with this new work had none of the prestige, or traditions, of those dealing with other arms of the Service. If we ask why so little was done for four years on Air Raid Precautions, the answer is to be found, partly indeed in the personal qualities of the Ministers concerned, but partly also in the fact that the Home Office, to which the responsibility was entrusted, was unaccustomed to war preparation work and was handicapped by its civilian character in competing with the war services for armaments finance. If we ask why no food reserves were provided till the summer of 1938, and then only on a small scale, the answer is not that their importance had been assessed objectively in relation to other requirements, by any human brain, but that there was no Department, until the Food (Defence Plans) Department created in December 1936, which had any responsibility for securing attention to the subject, and that the Department then established was given an inferior status and was attached ambiguously to two Ministers. And so we might continue. The conclusion clearly emerges. It is essential that there should be a suitable ministerial authority, which will effectively control the main lines of strategy as they are worked out through the Committee of Imperial Defence, responsible for framing the general principles and securing the ultimate sanction of the Cabinet.

A great improvement has been made in the replacement of Sir Thomas Inskip by Lord Chatfield, and by the addition of Sir John Anderson as Minister of Civilian Defence. It is difficult, however, to estimate how far Lord Chatfield will, with his present functions and resources, be able in practice to meet the need already described as regards the fighting services. Sir John Anderson, whose functions we shall discuss later, has a dual authority. He is in direct control of Air Raid Precautions and he has a co-ordinating rôle, not exactly defined, over other aspects of civilian defence. For the moment we must be content to remark that the situation is certainly better than it was some months ago, but that it is too early to judge how far the present ministerial organisation will meet the needs of the situation.

The initial error of the programme of 1937 was therefore in its main plan and conception. But what was wrongly planned was inadequately executed. It is indeed in its executive incompetence, as distinct from all questions of general policy, in the first two years of rearmament, that the Administration was during this period least capable of reasonable defence in the eyes of all those who followed closely what was being done.

This general remark is not intended to refer to the preparations of the two older fighting services for their accustomed tasks. The Navy is indisputably better than that of any potential adversary, and the only anxieties arise from the possibility of a challenge in the East at a time when its main strength is required in the West, and from certain of the unproved possibilities of the air. No difficulty in the East could, however, determine the issue of a war; protective measures believed to be effective have been taken against the attack on the fleet by aeroplanes; and the methods of dealing with the chief menace of the last war, the submarine, have since then been improved. Only one passing remark is here needed. The air menace to ships and docks, the prospect of hostile air and submarine bases

in Spain, the reduction in both the tonnage and personnel of our Mercantile Marine, all enforce the necessity of relieving the strain imposed on the Navy in discharging its vital task of enabling an adequate stream of imports to reach the country in time of war. We shall discuss later the storage of food and raw materials for this purpose.

Little, too, need be said of the work of the War Office in carrying out what it has regarded as its normal tasks. These tasks have, however, been enormously increased by the greater need for the provision of larger British forces on the Continent which results from recent events on the Continent. These have been reflected in the plans for a great increase in the Territorial Army, announced just before Easter, from 130,000 to 340,000. This will of course involve great problems of recruiting, military organisation and training, which I am not competent to discuss. In addition, however, it will require an immense demand for equipment and supplies of every kind. It is enough to say that this greatly adds to the strength of the case for the industrial reorganisation which is suggested later. The size of the Army which Great Britain will be able to make available for a concentrated war will be determined by the number of workers required at home to maintain both military and civilian supplies, and will therefore depend upon our methods of industrial production. The other considerations involved will be discussed when we come to the question of National Service.

With this brief comment on the older fighting services, we will proceed to consider more fully our defences against the new menace from the air, the responsibility for which is shared between the War Office (which controls the anti-aircraft guns), the Air Ministry and the civilian Departments.

## CHAPTER II

### THE POSITION IN SEPTEMBER 1938

I PROPOSE in this chapter to comment on the stage reached in our defence against air attack in September last. I have already indicated the reasons for going back to that time. It enables me to speak with more freedom than if I were describing our present defences. I must repeat that the present position is substantially better than it was then. Nevertheless, the methods of organisation have not yet been radically changed, and the personnel of the Administration is with only a few, though important, exceptions unchanged. The grave deficiencies disclosed at the crisis of September are sufficient therefore to reinforce the proposals that will follow later.

I will only summarise the record of the Air Ministry in bare outline. Mr. Baldwin, as Prime Minister, gave information as to the relative strength of Germany and ourselves in Air Force preparations which has been subsequently shown to have been seriously inaccurate. There has been some controversy as to how far the Air Ministry's intelligence system was at fault, or how far the Air Minister, then Lord Londonderry, gave inadequate information to the Prime Minister, or how far the latter failed to understand the significance of what was given him. Parity with the strongest Power within striking distance was promised. The fact, and the extent, to which we were falling behind this pledge was long concealed from the public; and the true position only became known through the work of outside critics, of whom the foremost was Mr. Winston Churchill. The response in increased effort, even under this external pressure, was lamentably inadequate. It became clear, moreover, that

the methods of allocating orders and arranging production of the Air Ministry, while Lord Swinton was its Minister, were still lamentably defective. Each demonstration of their inadequacy was met by absolute or qualified denials. At last, in May 1938, not through spontaneous initiative but as a result of sustained and effective pressure, Lord Swinton vacated his office and some change in system was introduced by his successor, Sir Kingsley Wood, though not the organisation required to give the maximum degree of standardised production. The overwhelming case, which will be summarised below, for a Ministry of Supply was not accepted. In the meantime the Ministry's programme allowed for a lower proportion of the defensive aircraft (the "fighters" or "interceptors") as compared with bombers than even the programmes of the aggressive countries, Germany and Italy. Policy was still dominated by the desperate and false slogan voiced by Mr. Baldwin, "the bomber will always get through". Here too, as a result again solely of external criticism, the proportions have been somewhat corrected. Up till late in 1938, however, if we allow for the greater cost in money, manpower and material of bombers, the proportion of effort was, I believe, not less than 10 to 1. Evidence as to the value of interceptors has nevertheless been accumulating and may now be taken as decisive. In the autumn of 1938, while I will not attempt to give precise figures, I do not think that any competent authority would now deny that Germany's actual air strength, rate of current production and organised potential capacity were all greatly in excess of ours, and that the disparity was still at that date tending to increase.

The War Office is responsible for defence against air attack so far as it is provided by anti-aircraft guns. This was a responsibility which was out of line with the Department's normal tasks and organisation, and it was reluctantly accepted. No suitable administrative arrangements were made to discharge it, and the new service suffered all

the handicaps of professional bias which have been described in the previous chapter. In the result no adequate orders were given or suitable steps taken to adapt the branches of industries concerned to the new form of production.

The delays and incompetence became gradually known in spite of every attempt to conceal them by ambiguous pronouncements, such as those to which the Sandys case called attention. As to the resulting position in September 1938, I will content myself with a quotation from an article by Captain Liddell Hart, the military correspondent of *The Times*: “. . . the total number of (anti-aircraft) guns for the defence of London was little more than a hundred, even if complete equipment were available . . . worse still was the unusable state of many of the guns and other equipment. . . . As for modern 3·7 inch guns it does not appear that they amounted to more than a small fraction, perhaps a fifth or a sixth, of the guns which were available.”

Guns of a new type take a long time to produce and the small numbers available reflect the omissions of 1936, when Mr. Duff Cooper was at the War Office, rather than of 1938 when Mr. Hore-Belisha had to answer for the deficiency. They have, in fact, been coming forward in substantial numbers in the last few months and the defence of London is already on an altogether different basis. The metropolis is no longer an undefended city. Nevertheless the demands of the country as a whole are very far from being met, and Mr. Hore-Belisha bears his share of responsibility for not insisting upon a more radical re-organisation, of which, as we shall see, he realised and admitted the need last autumn.

It is, however, in all that relates to civilian defence that the inertia of the Government was greatest. For four years after the advent of the Nazi régime practically nothing was done in A.R.P. except to devise precautions against gas, which would mostly have been quite



ineffective if (as must be expected) explosive bombs, which would shatter windows over a wide area, were employed simultaneously. Very little was done as regards the danger of fire: nothing whatever to meet the chief danger of explosive bombs. Sir John Simon, as Home Secretary, wasted two invaluable years in a financial dispute with the local authorities as to the proportion in which the cost of A.R.P. measures should be borne locally and centrally. At last, in November 1937, a Bill was introduced by the new Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, to authorise more extended action. Nothing illustrates better the psychology of the Government than its attitude at this time to the obvious necessity of large-scale evacuation. The word "evacuation" did not appear in the Bill. In answer to an Opposition amendment, the Solicitor-General argued elaborately that an obscurely worded general clause did in fact cover the powers required to arrange evacuation. This was denied in an equally elaborate argument by Sir Stafford Cripps. I pointed out as a layman that the mere fact that the argument could take place showed that, when the need arose, action might be impeded by the appeals of aggrieved parties to the courts, and that, if the Government really meant to cover evacuation, they should obviously obtain powers in a form which did not invite litigation. The answer was, in substance, that to mention the word "evacuation" would make the public think that evacuation would be necessary and practicable. This is one more instance of the Government's belief at that time that the public must be lulled into a false sense of security and that it was dangerous to trust them with the truth. It is this attitude which was apparently responsible for the concentration of effort for several years upon protection against gas, not because it was the greatest danger but because it was supposed to have most terror for the public mind, and some show of dealing with it would involve least effort. Perhaps the spectacle of gas

instruction in remote country regions, while nothing at all was done in many parts of London, is partly attributable to the same cause. If London had been attacked by explosive bombs in September 1938, what would have been the result of the years of A.R.P. work on the numbers of casualties? Some people would doubtless have been saved, but would there have been any considerable *net* reduction in the total deaths? In some respects A.R.P. would probably have increased them. For example, the fact that people had seen trenches (which could not have given more than poor shelter to a few hundreds) would, in case of a raid, have probably brought a panic rush of many thousands to the parks. Several thousands might have been crushed to death against the railings of St. James's Park, even though no bomb had fallen within miles of it.

I will conclude this note on the September 1938 position by a comment I wrote a fortnight after the crisis, the justice of which has, I think, been only confirmed by subsequent developments :

“What was the position in the last fateful days of September? The vulnerability of London and the great cities, of the docks and munitions areas, must certainly have been one of the most serious factors in the decisions of policy. And the public as a whole then perhaps became fully aware for the first time of the deplorable neglect of civilian defence in our general scheme of increased defensive measures — a fact that may prove of determining importance in the political developments of the near future.

“This neglect has not been retrieved, it has been shown to be less excusable, by the improvisations of the days immediately before and during the time of acute danger. Democracy, which has through its Government exhibited its weaknesses, at once revealed its hitherto unutilised resources of courage, public spirit and astonishing gifts of rapid organisation under local, voluntary and democratic

leadership. Even a few days could do much — but no improvisation at the last moment could, or can, retrieve the neglect and inertia of years. The Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence — who is better qualified to defend the Front Bench against its critics than the country against its dangers — and the Committee of Imperial Defence, have not secured an allocation of our resources, in money, in industrial technique, in men and in ability, that is proportionate to the real needs of our present strategic situation.

“ And what has been wrongly conceived has, at least in all that concerns civilian defence, been slackly and incompetently executed. Take the whole record. In every case the tale is the same. The glaring deficiencies have become gradually known and led to a powerful demand, in Parliament and outside, for reforms of method and policy. The Government has resisted and procrastinated, finally admitted that its critics were right by agreeing in principle to what they demanded, and then in practice done too little and done that little too late. This is true of aeroplane production generally, where the Government at last introduced more standardised methods but considered the time still not ripe for a Ministry of Supply. It is true of the reluctance to include a sufficient proportion of interceptors to bombers in their programme. It is true of the provision of anti-aircraft guns, where publicity has exceeded production. It is true of food storage, where the Government denied the necessity for two years, then admitted the principle, and then bought only a fraction of what is reasonably required. It is true above all of A.R.P. measures generally. Two vital years were spent on haggling about the respective financial contribution of the Treasury and the local authorities. The main effort was then concentrated upon the least of the dangers, gas bombs, to the partial neglect of the greater danger from incendiary bombs, and the almost complete neglect of the greatest danger from explosive

bombs. Evacuation plans were resisted in 1937; admitted to be necessary in May 1938; planned — under Parliamentary insistence — in the next two months by a Parliamentary Committee, but only translated into hurried administrative arrangements in the actual days of the crisis in September.

“ More was done, up till almost the last moment, for many country districts — the remotest villages sometimes having their gas instructors — than for London and the munitions areas. The instructions to hospitals and the medical profession were often confused and inconsistent. So, too, as regards the Government's attitude towards the use of the Tubes, the provision of trenches and of shelters. Whatever has been done has been done, not on the spontaneous initiative of the Government, but as the result of external pressure. And the action has always been dilatory; usually incompetent; always inadequate. It is a damning record, which cannot be retrieved by ‘an enquiry into the lacunae of our defence system’ by those responsible for them.

“ It is intolerable that a great and vulnerable nation, in a period that remains one of mortal danger, should have to rely upon a procrastinating and incompetent administration being stimulated into spasmodic and inadequate action by external pressure. But that is the position ” (in September 1938).

It is in the perspective which is given by this description of the position in the autumn of last year that we must consider the progress since made and the further steps that now require to be taken.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PERSONAL EQUATION

WHY is it that the country which twenty years ago emerged from the Great War with a greater Navy, a more formidable Army, a stronger Air Force and a sterner national temper than any other in the world, should have allowed so dangerous a loss of relative strength? How is it that the talent for organisation which in the later period of the war produced a system which excelled that of any Ally, and at least equalled that of any combatant, should to this extent have failed us? The basic character of the British people is the same, our industrial resources and human skill remain. Why is it that it is only now, six years after the new menace appeared, that they are beginning to be brought into effective operation, and still inadequately?

In part we may find the explanation in the slow-moving quality of the British temperament, in the national disinclination to act in anticipation of a need which has not developed to the point of a compelling necessity. In part we may say that the consciousness of what for a time was an assured superiority of strength, and a reaction against the experiences of the war, may have contributed to encourage delay and inaction. But patently such causes do not suffice for such a consequence.

The main explanation is to be found in the personal qualities of those in authority during these recent years. Parliament is not to blame, except so far as it bears a responsibility for the choice and support of the personnel of the Administration, for it has in these years been a spur to Government action and not a brake upon it. The electorate is not responsible, for it has returned to

Parliament an ample, indeed more than ample, majority of members of the party traditionally associated with strong armaments, who have supported the Executive with a consistent loyalty, which has erred by excess rather than deficiency. The main responsibility is a personal one. Who are those who bear it ?

*Mr. Baldwin*

The central figure is beyond question that of Mr. (now Lord) Baldwin. He commanded the most powerful force in the Cabinet and in Parliament when the Nazi régime was established. He was Prime Minister when the German rearmament reached dimensions which clearly necessitated a national effort in response. He shut his eyes to the evidence before him. He procrastinated when the evidence could no longer be ignored. He feared opposition from the electorate, but he neither tested the will of the people by a declaration of policy nor attempted to guide it by informing them of the danger which confronted them. He vacated his office with the nation unprepared — unprepared even to prepare ; and the Ministers to whom he bequeathed power were those whom he had himself chosen or retained in office.

The rise and fall of Mr. Baldwin is among the romances of English political history. Till the age of fifty he was an unnoticed back-bencher. A few months before he became Prime Minister through an accidental combination of circumstances, no one in Parliament could have foreseen such a future for him. Mr. Harold Nicolson reports that Lord Curzon exclaimed, in the first moment of his surprise and bitter disappointment, "A man of no experience. And of the utmost insignificance !" But within a few months how incredible seemed such an underestimate ! The new Prime Minister became, in the eyes of all but the extremists of Right or Left, the English "Everyman". He seemed the incarnation of the best

and most distinctive qualities and characteristics of the English race, its humanity, its instinct for liberty, its long traditions, its readiness to compromise, its delight in the countryside, its rich literary heritage, its essential liberalism. He had a deep and sincere love of British institutions and the free and humane way of life. He had a width of intellectual and emotional sympathies which extended beyond the limits of any party and class. And what he felt, he could express, alike in writing and in speech, with a grace and charm that few statesmen have ever equalled. The value of these qualities was increased by the political situation of the time when Mr. Baldwin rose to power. As an accidental result of the lines upon which political organisation had developed, middle, moderate, liberal opinion was excluded from electoral expression and representation in Parliament. What was most near to being the general sense of the nation was not reflected in any party programme or in the pronouncement of ordinary party leaders. In these circumstances Mr. Baldwin's eloquent and generous exposition of his own political philosophy met a response in millions of those, in all parties or in none, who could find no complete satisfaction in party allegiance. For a time his voice was the voice of England.

By 1926 he was much more than the Prime Minister of a Government placed in power by a party triumph. He had, for a moment, a national authority and prestige rarely equalled in our history. Looking at this date at his meteoric rise and triumph we might well have exclaimed, with an inversion of the Tacitean aphorism, "*incapax imperii nisi imperasset*" — "We did not think he could be a Prime Minister till he showed he was one".

But there was an ever-widening, and increasingly apparent, gulf between the eloquent expression of his outlook, philosophy and sympathies in speech and writing and their translation into action. The Public Orator and the Prime Minister were two different persons. And the

explanation is to be found, not in insincerity, but in a curious lethargy (or intermittency) of the will — which is the key to his political record.

Not that Mr. Baldwin was without a practical realism or incapable, upon occasion, of sustained and vigorous action. On the contrary, he combined with his lofty philosophy a singularly shrewd perception of political forces. He was a skilful party manager, and he knew well how to harness the strength which the nation gave to the Orator behind the machine which he directed as either Prime Minister or as party Leader. (Did he never, we wonder, practise before a mirror the angle of that briar pipe so that it should not disappoint the cartoonists?) It was in determining the purposes for which that machine was used that he at last disappointed and disillusioned the nation.

It was he who acquired the power to act — it was others, with a narrower vision, who acted. Not always indeed ; sometimes, and in the interest of some causes, he made his own policy and carried it through. In close sympathy with Lord Irwin he fought through an Indian policy with a sustained vigour and an unfailing parliamentary skill which showed that he could will as well as wish, could act as well as philosophise — when his interest was sufficiently engaged. And he handled the Abdication crisis with a skill and a determination never exceeded in our political history. In these two instances his convictions and emotions were strong enough to extend beyond the sphere of aspiration and exposition within which he usually remained ; they reached the springs of action ; and they supported him in a sustained effort till the end was achieved. But these instances are exceptional. At other times the springs of action were never reached, or the will to action flagged too soon. At the time of the General Strike of 1926 he expounded a policy which was at once strong and magnanimous. It evoked a national response. It carried him to victory. And then his will



flagged. Others were allowed to determine the details of the settlement and to sully the generosity of the policy he had proclaimed before victory was assured.

In other cases his aspirations stopped even further short of action. He talked eloquently, sincerely, generously of the problems of peace and war. But he never troubled to master the tiresome complexities of foreign affairs, and, so far as he was concerned, he allowed foreign policy to drift. He professed, doubtless with emotional sincerity, to regard the League of Nations as the foundation of his policy. But he never troubled to learn what the League was, how it functioned, what was needed to make it effective. It is characteristic that while year after year he took his holidays at Aix-les-Bains, only a few miles from Geneva, just when the annual Assembly of the League of Nations was meeting, nothing would induce him to cross those few miles for even the briefest of visits. His presence in the neighbourhood was known; his absence remarked; foreign delegates drew their inferences. He felt genuinely, he spoke eloquently, about the peace of the world — but he would not work for it.

It was only, however, the fateful period in history which began in January 1933 that revealed most fully these defects, of an intermittent will to action and a disinclination to work at distasteful tasks, and made them a great national disaster. He lulled the growing anxiety of the nation by a pledge of air parity with the nearest Power within striking distance. He did nothing to implement it. In one of the most extraordinary confessions a Prime Minister has ever made he has admitted that he refrained from ever proposing the policy which he thought the safety of the country required because he believed it would be unwelcome to the people — the public whom he had not only not instructed but had led into a fool's paradise.

Not absence of vision, nor incapacity either to judge the needs of a situation, or even to act when the will was

there — but a recurrent lethargy of the will was his undoing — and ours. Policy was proposed, but it was not enforced. His colleagues were chosen as political convenience or personal preference suggested, his under-secretaryships were filled with elderly friends, not the young men who should be the Cabinet Ministers of the future ; Departments went their way with no central direction or impetus from the Head of the Cabinet. He was a Public Orator at all times : but only intermittently a Prime Minister. The historian's verdict will after all be that of Tacitus upon Galba, no longer inverted, "*capax imperii nisi imperasset*" — "We thought he was a Prime Minister till he showed that he was not".

Mr. Baldwin left the Commons and his office in a blaze of glory after the Abdication crisis, which for a time, but only a time, blinded the nation to the disastrous deficiencies of his administration. Power passed to the colleagues he had chosen or retained. It is their, and not his, qualities that have determined the course of action during the last two years.

### *Mr. Hore-Belisha*

The personality of his successor merits a chapter to itself. But a few comments will be appropriate here upon the Ministers most directly concerned with defence. Mr. Hore-Belisha, the Secretary of State for War, undoubtedly has some notable qualities. If they are not always clearly seen it is not because they are hidden under a bushel but because the eye is dazzled by the blaze of light that surrounds them. He has an impulsive energy which has brought dramatic changes both in personnel and policy. He has not feared to replace officers in the highest position or to affront the opinions of the Officers' Corps. Whether his energy is continuous or intermittent, whether his choice of men is made with adequate consultation, consideration and judgement,

whether his new policies are sufficiently thought out and thought through, are questions upon which there is at present perhaps too little evidence to enable us to decide. It is certain that he inherited a legacy of deficiencies, and that he has effected some much needed reforms. But he did not, on his own initiative, proceed with sufficient rapidity to remedy the neglect in the provision of anti-aircraft guns, and when the deficiency was pressed upon him his first reaction was to deny rather than to correct it. He has, however, at least transmitted the pressure applied to himself to the rather lethargic machine under his control. Perhaps we may find his most characteristic expression in a speech of his at Cardiff in October 1938. After attempting for many months to interpose coloured glasses between the public and the omissions of the War Office, he suddenly admitted what his critics had alleged : " Under our present system nothing can guarantee an appreciable acceleration of the present programme, nor can there be an appreciable enlargement of it in a given time ". Yes, he saw what was wanted and he proclaimed what he saw, but there he stopped. We still have no such reform<sup>1</sup> as he declared to be necessary ; a flash of insight ; a reforming impulse ; but, so far as we know, no " carry through ". Will he add to his qualities a steady and constructive purpose and a sustained effort ? Will he realise as well as project ? The future must show.

Of our ministerial appointments to the Senior Service, the Admiralty, a single comment will perhaps suffice. They have apparently been made on the assumption, (which has on the whole prevailed for many years, in spite of occasional and notable exceptions), that the function of the First Lord is to defend Admiralty policy in Parliament, and that of the Sea Lords to frame it.

The Air Ministers must detain us longer, for their work touches more directly the new menace to our island immunity and the problem of civilian defence.

<sup>1</sup> *Note*—No longer entirely true, since April 20. See note on page 226.

*Lord Swinton*

In the crucial years of German Air expansion Lord Swinton was our Secretary of State for Air. He was in character and manner autocratic and inaccessible, not readily responsive to suggestions, not quickly adaptable to new conditions. He showed both energy and competence in speeding up and extending the work of the aeroplane firms with which his office had been accustomed to deal in less exacting periods. After a time he supplemented these methods by the establishment, through the same firms, of the "shadow factories". There he stopped, and he met the increasing anxiety of the nation, and the well-documented strictures of his critics, by comforting assurances which were duly transmitted to the House of Commons by the Prime Minister. He accepted, extended, stimulated, defended the system his office had built up; he neither supplemented it by any different system nor reformed it radically. He was at once the master and the slave of his machine. Only when he left it did he see clearly, as he did at once, the need for more. Within a few months of departure from the Office in which he could have insisted upon the creation of a Ministry of Supply, he was declaring the need for it.

*Sir Kingsley Wood*

His successor, Sir Kingsley Wood, appointed in response to an accumulating discontent with our meagre production, presents in almost every detail a complete contrast. He is accessible, likeable, and quickly responsive to new ideas, an energetic and skilful organiser. The clue to his qualities is to be found in his previous record. He was an admirable Minister for a great, cumbrous, rather unimaginative, but efficient, Department like the Post Office. With such a Department behind him he could readily conceive such an idea as

that of Is. trunk calls in the evening, or recognise its value if suggested by someone else ; an order to the Department and the thing was done. He could both publicise and extend the telephone and other services with no more sustained personal effort. By such methods, without radical reform, or any exceptional constructive qualities, he could substantially increase the utility of the postal services and double their popularity. His next office, however, the Ministry of Health, afforded more limited opportunities for action of this kind. Its typical problems, such as that of replacing the chaos of legislation affecting town-planning and ribbon development by a comprehensive and coherent system, or of changing the area of local authorities to meet the extended scope of their overlapping activities, are more exacting in their requirements. To be able to plan broadly and execute skilfully, where the task is so vast and its detail so complex, requires a constructive ability that is very rare. Sir Kingsley Wood made no attempt at so ambitious an enterprise. But if he does not possess constructive ability of this rare kind, he has beyond question great talents for organisation, and an administrative energy which is scarcely suggested by his comfortable and cherubic appearance. He knows how to utilise the forces within his reach ; he understands the arts of publicity and popularity ; he is an admirable salesman : and he is ready to use these valuable talents not merely for personal but for public purposes.

His new work reflects all these qualities, and their limitations. He quickly sensed the new perspective in which the nation desired the question of our air strength to be viewed. He persuaded his colleagues and the Treasury of the need to quadruple our expenditure. He responded to suggestions that the proportion of interceptors should be increased and that the services of a great industrialist like Lord Nuffield should be utilised. He loosened up the whole system of control, made it more elastic, more compatible with rapid and standardised production. It is

characteristic of both his qualities, and of the point at which they stop, that he reorganised his Department so as to obtain as many of the advantages of a Ministry of Supply as were possible without the bold and radical reform which was needed for the maximum result. So far he went, but there he stopped. He has the quality of a skilful organiser, but not of a Haldane of 1912 or a Lloyd George of 1917.

Our measures of civilian defence are in part dispersed among the Departments of the Board of Trade, the Ministries of Health and Transport, and in part assigned to the A.R.P. division of the Home Office. Till the appointment of Sir John Anderson, the main responsibility thus fell upon the two successive Home Secretaries, Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare.

### *Sir John Simon*

Sir John Simon is one of the greatest advocates of our time. He has natural gifts and personal qualities perhaps more perfectly adapted to his profession than any of his contemporaries possess ; a mind stored with vast knowledge always ready at his command ; an unequalled lucidity of exposition ; unflagging industry and impeccable health. There are few intellectual pleasures more intense than that of hearing a complex case presented in the courts or in Parliament by this supreme advocate. He has some arguments of unshakable validity ; others which are less sound than plausible. At the outset the listener is critical and vigilant. As he follows the flawless exposition of all that is strongest in the case he accepts the logic, he succumbs to the charm. For a moment his attention relaxes ; then the weakest part of the argument is reached and passed ; the triumphant conclusion achieved. Only the next morning, if then, is it seen just where that rapid transition came. I am told that great advocates are divided into those who expend their main effort in

developing the strength of their case where it is strongest, and those who prefer to buttress it where it is weakest, and that Sir John is in the former class.

But if we were discussing skill in advocacy, the only question would be just which position Sir John occupies among that small company of the greatest advocates of our time ; and it would be presumption for a layman to offer an opinion on such a subject.

It is not, however, with Sir John's qualities as an advocate, but as a statesman, that we are now concerned, and a statesman in successive offices in which vision, prevision and executive action have been needed.

An advocate's experience is often, though not always, a good preparation for parliamentary success. But as a qualification for executive responsibility it has a serious limitation. When a case is brought to counsel all the action is over. The question presented to him is not "What shall be done?" but "How shall what has already happened be so presented as to make the verdict favourable to my client?" When an awkward situation in foreign affairs was presented to Sir John, what was his instinctive personal attitude to it? Was the question to which his mind automatically turned: "Here is an undesirable situation — how shall I deal with it?" or was it "Here is a situation that looks unpleasant; how shall I make it look better?" In the answer to this question we might find a clue to many of the events of 1931 to 1935.

We are more directly concerned now, however, with Sir John's record in the next two years when, as Home Secretary, he was responsible for A.R.P. It was an unpleasant, distasteful task, out of harmony alike with the traditions of the Home Office and the interests of the Home Secretary. It required imaginative insight into the far-reaching consequences of a novel form of danger. It required a bold and comprehensive plan to deal with the varied impact of gas, and fire, and high explosives upon a

vulnerable industrial system and an unprepared civilian population. The Home Office experimented with measures to deal with the least of the dangers, gas, for which the remedy could most easily be found. It made recommendations for sealing rooms with sticking paper which might perhaps have been of some value on the extremely improbable assumption that gas bombs would be unaccompanied by either incendiary or explosive bombs ; and the inhabitants of many of the most remote villages — though few in some of the most populous London boroughs — listened to lectures from gas instructors. It is not known whether Sir John took any personal interest in these futilities. He found a more congenial task, both as Home Secretary and later as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in negotiating with Local Authorities as to the proportions in which the cost of A.R.P. measures should be borne by them and by the Treasury. In the meantime almost all practical work to deal with the most serious dangers from fire and high explosives was postponed — for two crucial years. We have seen the consequences.

Sir John has all the qualities required to make a distinguished parliamentary leader, and a notable Home Secretary for the normal work of the Home Office. It was his misfortune, and ours, that in the period of his office the Departments to which he was appointed required very different qualities.

### *Sir Samuel Hoare*

Sir John was succeeded as Home Secretary by Sir Samuel Hoare, who inherited the chaos of A.R.P. and the gathering indignation of the public as they realised the dangers to which they were exposed, and the inadequacy, indeed the almost complete absence, of the defensive measures for which the Home Office had accepted responsibility.

Sir Samuel, too, has notable, though rather different qualities. With an intellectual equipment that does not



compare with his predecessor's, he is an able Parliamentarian, skilful alike in exposition and debate. He is industrious, conscientious and competent ; he is humane, accessible, popular and responsive. His greatest achievement was in his capacity of Secretary of State for India. He piloted the Indian Bill through Parliament, and elaborated it in his office, with unfailing patience and skill. It is to be remarked, however, that the policy which was so translated into practical effect was initiated by Lord Irwin with the support of Mr. Baldwin. The supreme ministerial function, the creative vision, the bold decision on main policy, were theirs, not his. Where there were none to assume that function, he was less successful. As Secretary for Air he was an able defender of his Department in Parliament ; he showed physical enterprise in his personal ventures in the air. But he let the Air Force decline ; he neither reformed an office greatly in need of reform nor had any vision of its future rôle. As Foreign Secretary he readily accepted the prevailing sentiment of the Cabinet, itself responsive to the mood of the country, in favour of the League of Nations. He proclaimed a bold policy in regard to Abyssinia ; but he had neither calculated the consequences beforehand nor did he find the determination to face them when they came. He has in a high degree the qualities appropriate to the second rank, and might even reach the first rank in halcyon days. He would be an ideal Permanent Secretary to administer a policy of a Minister who himself supplied the faculties of creative insight and vigorous decision. But he does not possess these qualities himself.

For a year A.R.P. reflected the personality of Sir Samuel. He was sensitive to the demand in Parliament for further action. In November 1937 he introduced a long-overdue A.R.P. Bill to provide some of the requisite powers. We have already noted, as indicative of the mind both of the Government and Sir Samuel Hoare at that time, the reluctance to mention evacuation in this Bill and the

reason given that it was not desirable to let the public think that evacuation would be necessary. It is equally characteristic, however, that having made the objection, Sir Samuel quietly dropped in the word "evacuation" at the Report stage. But he did nothing to build on the new powers he had so acquired or to work out what evacuation must really mean until, under increasing parliamentary pressure, he appointed the Anderson Committee seven months later, in July 1938. At last a policy was worked out in main outline and its principles were accepted. But publication was deferred, and so was any serious work upon it, until the fateful days of the month of September itself.

It has been worth while to recall this example because it is so significant of Sir Samuel's character. He responded to external pressure for a policy bolder than he had himself conceived, but he did so slowly and reluctantly; and never at any stage did he seem to have faced the real danger, and the action required to meet it, in their full magnitude. He sees clearly what is within his habitual range of vision. For what is beyond and outside it, his vision fails; and if the prospect is intensely distasteful his inclination is to shut, or half shut, his eyes.

And yet his qualities are as evident as their limitations. In his handling of prison reform, in the attention he has devoted to the distresses of individual refugees, in the patient welcome he gives to innumerable deputations, in the conscientious devotion to the current duties of his many-sided office, he has been in many respects the model of what a civil department engaged in its normal peace-time tasks desires.

It is an interesting question in psychology to ask what Sir Samuel's feelings must have been on the eve of September 28th, 1938. Humane in his instincts and conscious of his responsibility, and knowing what he must have known of the defencelessness of London at that time, and of the risks of wholesale slaughter within a few hours;

then at least the rose-tinted glasses which he had worn so comfortably, which he was so soon afterwards to replace, must surely have been shaken from him. What in the moment of clear vision did he see? It must have been with relief that he accepted the transfer of his most onerous responsibilities to the new Minister of Civilian Defence, and that he turned back to his more congenial work on prison reform.

*Sir Thomas Inskip*

One other personality needs some description before we leave the pre-crisis appointments.

We have already described the circumstances in which Mr. Baldwin met the demand for the creation of a Ministry of Defence by appointing instead a "Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence". The new Minister was doubtless intended to arbitrate between the fighting services when they differed and not to embarrass them when they agreed. It was convenient, too, to deal with the other troublesome demands for a Ministry of Supply and for laying-in food reserves by asking the same Minister to co-ordinate supplies and to consider the question of storing food.

Sir Thomas Inskip was selected to fill the new post. He was well qualified to relieve the Government for the time of some of its embarrassments and to avoid causing them any additional ones. He arbitrated in the conflict between the Air Ministry and the Admiralty and brought it to a decision which, whether or not it was the right one, was at least a decision that relieved the Committee of Defence and its Chairman from further tiresome disputes. He had numerous conversations with the many officers engaged in purchasing supplies through various co-ordinating committees. He devoted some share of attention to the problem of food reserves and decided, by the light of nature, or with the advice of a new branch of the Board of Trade which was attached to another Minister

and preoccupied with another task, that this problem did not exist except as a possible difficulty of the first few weeks.

He perhaps came about as near to being a Minister of Supply as to being a Minister of Defence.

With this conception of his functions, the difficulties Sir Thomas had to meet came not from any resentment in the Services at his interference, but from dissatisfaction in Parliament that he achieved, and indeed attempted, so little. He had to meet a constant, growing, well-informed and increasingly indignant attack. For meeting this too he had formidable, and of their kind unequalled, qualifications.

Massive in figure, impressive in his delivery and imperturbable in manner, no weakness in the case he was defending embarrassed the confident flow of his argument ; no strength in the attack disturbed his equanimity. He was helped too by his transparent sincerity, and the unquestionable honesty and integrity of the whole of his personal and public record. Others might be suspected of deceiving their audience, but not Sir Thomas. What he said, he patently believed. Others might be suspected of a partially deliberate self-deception, of shutting or half shutting their eyes to unpleasing truths ; but not Sir Thomas. He did not need to shut his eyes. He could look with frank and fearless gaze at any prospect, however appalling — and fail to see it.

His personality was well adapted to the limitation of his functions. He is not only a lawyer by profession, accustomed to arbitrate but not to act. He is also a supreme example of the non-executive temperament. Alike by professional experience and by natural endowment, he is qualified to follow an argument, but not to comprehend a situation, still less to handle it.

To the end of his tenure of the office, his conviction that what he did not do did not need to be done remained to all appearance unshaken. But he did become aware that a growing body of opinion differed from him.

He was at the end, as at the beginning, the just man ; but the just man now in adversity. He probably welcomed his transfer to an office where executive qualities are less desired.

There is indeed no place in the Cabinet which is so well adapted to his personality as that which he now occupies as Secretary of State for the Dominions. He and the Dominions are to be equally congratulated on his transfer. For the Dominions usually desire for the Department concerned with their affairs, first a Minister who is honourable, impressive and dignified, and then preferably one who is endowed with a temperament which does not tempt him to do much more than exhibit those qualities. Sometimes neither of these requirements has been satisfied in the occupant of the office ; sometimes one has been without the other. Rarely have both been met in so eminent a degree as by the appointment of Sir Thomas Inskip.

With the exception of the Prime Minister, of whom a sketch will be attempted in a later chapter, this exhausts the list of the personalities most directly responsible for our defences as they were at the time of the September crisis. Since then, two notable appointments have been made, distinguished from all preceding ones in that the choice was in no degree determined by political considerations but solely by a desire to find the man best qualified to discharge the functions entrusted to him.

### *The Psychology of the Crisis Cabinet*

Before, however, we pass to a consideration of the new and better prospect so opened to us, it may be well to make some general reflections upon the personal aspects of the Crisis Cabinet.

No personal appreciation of the qualities of the Ministers concerned that attempts to be just, even though it is written in indignation at their inadequate achieve-

ment, can fail to present a picture of eminent abilities.

Intelligence and experience, natural and acquired, are in most cases notable, and in some cases supreme of their kind. The contrast between at least eminent personal quality and very inadequate achievement is, upon any estimate, striking and surprising. How is it that such men can have apparently so far failed to comprehend the situation that confronted them, can have so far failed to handle it, and yet for so long have regarded their record with, to all appearances, a considerable measure of complacency?

It is, of course, a partial explanation to say that their qualities, though eminent, have not been those which the needs of an exceptional situation required, and that one form of ability does not imply another. We must note, too, that the criticisms we are making both of inadequate action and of the mental attitude with which it is associated, apply in some measure not only to the Government but also to the permanent personnel of both the fighting and the civil departments. We must also take into account the complexity of the task presented and the sheer weight and size of the administrative machine, organised for different purposes, and with its perspective distorted by a long preoccupation with different work, which the Ministers had to control and direct. But that too is not enough. We must penetrate the recesses of individual and composite psychology to complete the explanation.

No one, I think, who in the pre-crisis years has carefully studied the Front Bench or seen either its occupants or their principal official advisers in intimate and confidential conversation with men of comparable abilities and experience outside the Service, can have failed to be struck with one curious phenomenon. Almost all those within the Government service, Ministers and officials alike, not merely professed, but really had, an outlook upon the character of the menace offered by the dictator countries and the scale of the efforts needed to meet it, which was

different from that of almost all outside. It was not merely a defensive attitude under criticism. It penetrated deeper. It was not the possession of comforting information not accessible to private persons. It was not even a sense of resentment at a failure of those outside to realise the full complexity of the administrative difficulties, though that may have been present and was not without justification. There was something more than that, and it was common to almost all who bore the actual burden of official action. There was a general mental attitude which was common to all within and was notably different from that of all outside ; there was a corporate mind which was more than the sum of varying individual minds, and a corporate judgement which influenced rather than reflected individual judgements.

How did it originate ? It was due, I suggest, to two facts of human psychology : the tendency to repress what is unpleasing, and the tendency to become oneself the victim of one's own persuasion. The new task was too vast for the administrative machine to which it was presented. Each individual officer, when he faced the menace and contemplated the share in meeting it which fell within his own responsibility, could not but be conscious at first that his own individual effort, and the corporate effort of which he was a part, were inadequate. The first response might be a stimulus to bolder action ; but the pace set by events was too great, counteracting measures could not catch up with — they began to fall further behind — the need. A sense of humiliation and futility began to paralyse the will ; and then the automatic self-protective mechanism of the human mind came into operation. As the gap between action and need seemed to widen, vision diminished and narrowed ; all that was beyond the work of the day, the need of the moment, became indistinct. Thus, at least, the nervous equilibrium, the professional self-respect, required for the competent execution of the daily task could be preserved. All that was not being done,

all that was not imperatively demanded by the events and instructions of the day, was pushed to the fringes of the active consciousness. And in a body of men, working in intimate contact and subject to the same instinctive urge, the results were contagious; each was confirmed in his own psychological reactions by observing similar ideas in his colleagues. The consequence was the official mind of 1937-8.

Those who were without the responsibilities of office, without an intimate knowledge of administrative difficulties, and thus exempt from the protective self-illusioning process just described, saw the dangers more clearly and voiced an increasingly indignant criticism. And thus occurred the curious phenomenon that most of the important initiatives in extending the scale of our defensive preparations came for some years, not from within, but from without, the machine of Government.

This is not all. If the last response to pressure was to concede, the first was usually to resist. To defend inadequate action it was necessary to present the situation at its best. The public must not be frightened. Those who warned them were "jitterbugs". It seemed better to direct action to allaying fears rather than to removing dangers. Gas might be less serious than incendiary or explosive bombs, but it might be easier to allay public fears by directing attention there than elsewhere. Evacuation might be desirable, but it would scare the people to mention it. The chances of aggression from the dictators might be serious, but it would be unwise to let the public realise how serious they were. These considerations determined the tone of official statements and, in no small measure, the perspective and direction of official action, in the years before the September crisis. And then there happened once more what has happened so often. Those who began by persuading others ended by persuading themselves.

I recall a striking instance of this phenomenon from the



last war. The Admiralty used to publish weekly statements of the losses of merchant ships by submarine attack. This was all very well so long as the losses were comparatively small. But in the later months the rate of loss increased till it reached alarming dimensions. An ingenious device was adopted to allay the anxieties of the public. The figures of loss were correctly reported together with a statement of the number of arrivals and departures of British ships. The published return included, however, in these entries without distinction not only overseas ships subject to submarine attack, which only numbered about 150 a week, but cross-Channel vessels, ships shifting ports or small coastal craft merely arriving from another coastal port and never seriously at risk, which numbered about 2400. The statistics were always exact but the contrast between safe arrivals and departures so stated suggested that there was a much smaller risk to the ocean-going vessels than actually existed. After a time the public felt it was being misled, and there was a strong demand for the publication of the really relevant figures, that is, the safe arrivals and departures of ocean-going vessels. One day I received a visit from the Admiral who bore the main responsibility for the naval protection of merchant vessels. He said he thought the weekly return should be amended and asked me if I could supply the true figures of ships arriving and departing to and from overseas. I replied that I could, but that I did not believe that he would publish them. "Why not?" he said. "What were the figures for last week?" I replied (I give now only approximate figures), "35 losses, and 140 arrivals—not 2500—a 20 per cent loss". His face blanched and for a moment he could not credit the figures. The weekly return remained unchanged. He had become the dupe of his own dope.

Thus did those in office during the pre-crisis years practise the methods of Dr. Coué till the effects were visible upon almost all of them. Couéism has its uses ;

it often induces happiness and mental, even physical, well-being. But unhappily it cannot affect external forces and events. Collective Couéism was the undoing of the crisis Cabinet.

### *The New Appointments*

The two most notable appointments since the crisis have, as we have indicated, been of a different character. Sir John Anderson is, in the general verdict of the Civil Service (in which, as one who worked intimately with him both before and during the war, I entirely agree), the best administrator the Service has produced in his generation. He has proved his quality in the Insurance Commission, the Inland Revenue, the Home Office, the Ministry of Shipping, in Ireland, and in Bengal. It is not to be expected that his special qualities and experience should be combined with either the dynamic energy or the parliamentary eloquence of a Lloyd George or Churchill at their prime ; and what he can do will be determined partly by the authority which his colleagues and the financial provision which the Treasury will allow him.

The scale and general scope of his defensive measures will depend upon them as well as upon him, and upon the measure in which the public equip themselves for a sustained and intelligent support for an adequate policy. This is exactly the situation in which such an institution as the Air Raid Defence League, which will be described elsewhere, has the greatest chance of performing a public service. For years those who have desired adequate civilian defence have been knocking at a locked door. Now the door is no longer closed. If not open, it is at least ajar. It can be opened.

Of Lord Chatfield I must write without a similar personal acquaintance. The professional opinion of his service awards him a position corresponding to that which the Civil Service has assigned to Sir John Anderson. At least we have, at the centre-point of our defensive pre-

parations, a man not only of high intellectual capacity, rare in any profession, but one who has thought long and deeply on problems of defence and has been trained in a sphere of action and administrative responsibility.

We must wait to see how he will overcome the limitations of powers and resources in personnel under which his office has hitherto suffered, but we may perhaps wait with a reasonable hope.

The crisis of September was followed by a considerable increase in administrative energy and by the appointment of two new Ministers, in a Cabinet of 22, on personal merits and qualifications. It is something. It is not enough.

## CHAPTER IV

### GENERAL STAFFS — MILITARY AND ECONOMIC

ANY general survey of our defensive position, however summary and inadequate, brings out the immense range, intricacy and interdependence of our defensive preparations. The basic need therefore is for an organ of government which can plan the main policy and principles of these preparations as a whole. We have already indicated why the machinery of the Committee of Imperial Defence has failed for this purpose. It is equally evident that the Cabinet, as at present constituted, is also very ill-adapted to meet the need. It is composed almost entirely of Departmental Ministers, each of whom is preoccupied with current executive tasks and is served by a staff which is similarly occupied. The few Ministers without portfolio are not usually chosen for any special ability to plan in broad outline; they are not supplied with a personnel which could help them in such a task; they are not entrusted with such a duty nor given the authority which it would require.

We need first, therefore, a small inner Cabinet of Ministers relieved of departmental duties, of suitable personal qualities to conceive and elaborate a general policy, and furnished with an adequate and appropriate organisation. It is tempting to discuss the precise form and function of such a body as a part of the normal working of the British Constitution. But in present circumstances it would need to be determined in large measure by the personal qualities of the Ministers immediately available; and we will, therefore, be content with laying down the main principle and proceed to consider the character of the organisation that should be at the service and under the control of this inner Cabinet.

Logically, the committees, now under the C.I.D., which are concerned with economic problems should be related to a planning organisation of their own. There should be an Economic General Staff, separate from the C.I.D. itself (which would remain as the Military General Staff), and under the authority, perhaps through the Minister of Civilian Defence, of the Inner Cabinet. At this late stage of our preparations the establishment of such a new staff (which would need to be rooted firmly in the civilian departments although associating outside experts with them), and the necessary internal co-ordination between the two staffs, may present great difficulties; and some form of compromise may be inevitable. It is worth while, however, to consider the reasons in principle for this separation and for putting economic planning on a different basis from any that now exists.

The two essential features of the next war will be that it will be "total" and that it will be mechanised. The whole strategy of our defensive preparations must be based upon these two facts, of which the full consequences have not yet been recognised either in our policy or in our organisation.

War will be total in the sense that the whole of the civilian population, and all their activities, will be the subject of attack; and that the whole of their resources will be required to contribute to the war. And since the war will be mechanised, to an altogether unprecedented extent, the proportion of those engaged in the civilian work needed to enable the actual combatants to fight will be much greater than in any previous conflict.

It is these two connected facts that make modern warfare a contest between economic resources and organisation. The actual fighting forces will be no more than the spearhead of the weapon, and the shaft will be immensely longer than the head.

It will be well, before we proceed further, to illustrate what this means. Every centre of population; all

industrial plant, whatever purpose it serves ; every railway ; all main roads and the transport on them ; as well as all military centres, aerodromes and ships, will be subject to attack from the air. Wherever the treasure is, there will the vultures be gathered together.

No less striking is the effect of increased mechanisation. The latest arms of war require an immensely greater proportion of non-combatants to make and supply them. An aeroplane or a tank may need literally scores of men for its ground staff and service. And in addition we must consider the men who make the aeroplane and the tank, and the munitions they expend ; and those who supply the food and the clothing and other necessities for all those so concerned and their families, together with other essential services such as transport. Even in land warfare, mechanisation has gone very far and the anticipated expenditure per man is much greater than at the peak of the last war.

Totalitarian war, in a word, does not mean that we shall have more combatants. The difference is not that more will fight but that all will be at risk and all will be engaged in work directly related to the war effort. The spearhead is becoming continually sharper, its shaft longer.

The consequence is inescapable. Our task is one of economic organisation and adaptation. Success or defeat will depend upon the relative efficiency for the purpose of the war effort of the rival economic systems. Our organisation must recognise and reflect this fact. It does not do so now.

The limiting factor to the size and efficiency of our Air Force, our Navy and our Army will all be found in the numbers we require to retain in civilian work to supply them, and the margin so left for combatants ; and this is essentially a matter of economic planning and economic organisation.

In saying this I do not wish to imply that a body of

people who have special experience of the economic system should be put in a position in which they would in fact dictate the limits of our fighting forces. For in this way we should run into another danger. Those who are entirely preoccupied with the economic side of the problem, and have no corresponding knowledge of the strategic and political need for enlarging our fighting services, are certain to underestimate the economic possibilities. If all those who had special experience of shipping in the last war had been asked to estimate the limit which would be set by our importing capacity to our general war effort, they would certainly have put it too low ; and our combatant effort would have been disastrously reduced. Only under the pressure of actual necessity did we find what we could do, first by squeezing all but the absolutely essential out of our imports, and secondly by increasing our total imports through the reorganisation of shipping and shipping routes. It would in fact be as dangerous to allow the fighting services to make their plans without an adequate consideration of economic possibilities and limits, as to allow those concerned only with the latter to prescribe the limits to the former.

In considering what is the present defect in our system, as we must, we should be careful not to fall into the opposite one. The system proposed above would enable the balance to be kept. The Inner Cabinet would consider both the strategic needs and the economic possibilities with the help of those best qualified to speak on each, and would decide how to strike the balance. And the task of the Economic General Staff would be not only to advise what could be produced but, under the pressure of Cabinet policy, to advise also the measures of economic reorganisation needed to secure the required increase.

All our probable enemies and some of our probable friends have for many years recognised the necessity of what had just been urged, and have acted accordingly, as we have not. We are years behind in planning alike

the best use of our resources and the best way to increase them. But these resources are greater even than those with which we entered the last war. And we have the same skill and ability, if we will but employ them in time, which then made the British economic system so powerful an instrument of war.



## CHAPTER V

### INDUSTRIAL MOBILISATION

#### *A Ministry of Supply*

THE first step in the reorganisation needed to adapt industry for the vast demands of the war services is the creation of a Ministry of Supply. This has for some years been a central point of contention between the Government and those who have been dissatisfied with the progress of war preparations.

The case for the establishment of such a Ministry, for the purpose of centralising, and as far as possible standardising, the principal supplies of both the fighting and civilian services, is overwhelmingly strong on its merits ; and it is confirmed by a consensus of authority.

The three ex-Ministers of Munitions, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Addison, have been strongly urging the proposal, and they are supported by Lord Trenchard and even by Lord Swinton, now that he has left an office which greatly needs it. The war experience is equally impressive. The whole of our national existence may depend upon whether we can double or treble an annual production of aeroplanes of 3000 or 4000 a year. But at the end of the war the Ministry of Munitions was constructing at the rate of 30,000 a year. It is true, of course, that in the war there was a concentration of effort and a degree of control of the whole economic system which is much more difficult in time of peace. It is also true that the aeroplanes now being made are very different from the type of 1918. But against this we must remember that in 1918 two million productive workers were withdrawn from productive work for mili-

tary service and that this large Army, a mobilised Navy and a vast Air Force had to be equipped and supplied for the immense consumptive needs of active warfare.

The range both of powers and duties of a Ministry of Supply in time of peace would be narrower than those of the Ministry of Munitions in war-time. Let us see just what such a Department could do.

The first necessity is obviously that standardised methods should be applied, to the utmost possible extent, to the production of what is most urgently needed, such as aeroplanes and anti-aircraft guns. For this purpose it is essential to limit the numbers of types to the minimum really necessary; then to select the best design for each type and to order large numbers for which production is allowed to proceed without interruption through change of design. It will, of course, be necessary to experiment with new designs. But experimental work of this kind necessarily involves great delay and is fatal to standardisation. It is essential, therefore, that it should be limited to a few firms and small numbers. The main stream of production must be separated from such experiments. In this way only will it be possible to secure both improvement in design and also, what is now imperative, a great increase in numbers.

It is in the next place essential that new industrial resources should be utilised, industries hitherto working upon other forms of production being adapted upon a large scale.

Now all experience shows that fighting services, with a military hierarchy and discipline, are unfitted for responsibilities of this kind, which are quite different from those of normal peace conditions. In ordinary times it is quite fitting that a Service Department should order its own implements of warfare. In doing so it deals with specialised firms accustomed to its methods. Its personnel can judge whether a gun or aeroplane is good, but it knows little of methods of industrial production. It

does not know, or need to know, what simplification in design will greatly increase the rate and scale of manufacture, for the numbers required are easily within the scope of the firms from which it orders, and if it wants rather more it asks the same firms to expand or sub-contract. It is, moreover, naturally and rightly, more interested in constantly experimenting to improve design than in securing the greatest possible numbers, for which there is at such times neither the need nor the money.

Now, however, numbers and rapidity of production are essential. And for this both standardisation and the enlistment of new industrial resources are indispensable. A fighting service has neither the technical knowledge nor tradition for thinking in terms of manufacturing process or securing industrial adaptation. And its commitments and associations are a handicap. It leans on its client firms, and it cannot be expected that these will throw themselves with ardour into the work of bringing new competitors into their field, who may remain when orders fall off again.

These objections are not fatal in the case of a Department like the Admiralty, which has experience of building in its own dockyards, and which may need to increase its orders but not to multiply them several times in a short period. But they are fatal in the case of a Department like the Air Ministry, and no internal reorganisation such as has been attempted can do more than mitigate the evil consequences. A new department, whether we call it a Ministry of Supply or a Department of Industrial Mobilisation, headed by a Minister of great authority and staffed with a personnel who are acquainted with manufacturing process and organisation, is essential. Arrangements could perhaps be made between such a Department and the Air Ministry which would permit the latter to deal direct with the aeroplane firms who have specialised for many years on Air Ministry work and are best qualified to collaborate in trying out new models and designs. But

the main mass of production must be standardised.

The case becomes even stronger when we examine the reasons given by the Government for resisting the proposal. Lord Winterton, for example, spent some time in one of the numerous debates on the subject in arguing, what no one would deny, that aeroplanes cannot be mass-produced to the same extent as Ford cars. Of course not. But I at once asked him whether standardisation had gone as far as was technically practicable, or as far as our principal rival had carried it. No answer was given — for the true answer would obviously in both cases have been in the negative. Then the Prime Minister on two occasions laid considerable emphasis upon minor differences between the proposals made by Mr. Churchill and myself respectively. Mr. Churchill had suggested a rather wider range and a more complete responsibility for design as well as production. These differences are of comparatively minor importance. The fact is that the precise scope of a Ministry is a matter of convenience which varies with circumstances. Even in 1918 it was found best for the Admiralty to do much of its own ordering. At the present moment a Ministry would need to deal mainly with the equipment of the increased territorial forces and with aeroplanes and incidental supplies for air defence. Its range could be gradually extended as might be found desirable. As to design, it is essential that the new Department should be able to insist upon a limitation of types to the minimum, and should be able to prevent changes of design during the process of manufacture which would involve delay ; in many classes of supplies the final authority on design might well be given in it. There is, however, in my view, some reason, in the special case of aeroplanes, to give the pilots in a dangerous service the assurance that no design shall be utilised which is not agreed as satisfactory by their own Ministry with its own service organisation : and I think this would be quite practicable. In any case, however, if the new Department had a final authority as

to design, it would obviously only exercise this on the advice of competent officers with flying experience. The difficulty is one for which there are several quite practicable solutions and it constitutes no serious obstacle to the main proposal.

An argument which merits more serious attention is the one that a Ministry of Supply would be useless unless it has compulsory powers. This is, however, a mistake. The compulsion mainly required now is upon Government Departments, not the public. Even under war conditions industry was not conscripted, but controlled through a priority allocation of materials, and through the power to grant or withhold exemption from combatant service. That may in time be necessary again, in which case a Ministry would naturally have to employ fuller powers. But for the reasons already given it could serve an invaluable purpose even when supplies of materials do not need to be rationed, and without compulsory powers over industry.

It has also been argued that it would be some time before a Ministry of Supply could give substantial results, and that in the meantime production would be slowed up. The second of these alleged disadvantages is completely unnecessary if the new Minister shows ordinary prudence and if no departmental sabotage is allowed. The new Ministry could proceed to arrange for more standardised production and to bring in new industrial resources. But in the meantime it would not interfere with current production or cancel existing orders. It is true that a considerable time would elapse before substantial results could be achieved. But we have a long-term as well as a short-term need, and that is so much the more reason for starting at once. It is surely fantastic to say, as the Government has done, that the time is not yet ripe, but that a new Ministry would be set up in war-time.

Lastly, it is alleged that our exports would suffer. This is really a complete fallacy. It is not a Ministry of

Supply, but increased armaments production, that may adversely affect exports. Only so far as the new Ministry increased production would it tend to have this defect. And, for a given volume of production, it would in fact tend to mitigate this consequence. When the strain in materials becomes serious such a Ministry can, as in 1917, make arrangements to help exports by giving a priority in the allocation of materials to exporting industries over those producing for less essential home demands.

These objections, in summary, merely reflect governmental inertia and departmental jealousy. I am convinced myself that we shall have a new Ministry after we have lost further invaluable time and are seen to be lagging even further behind. The Government have reached a clearly recognisable stage in the development of their attitude towards this kind of demand in Parliament. In one after another of the defensive preparations the Government have first shown what the House has gradually realised to be inexcusable inertia. Then there has been a growing movement of indignation, to which the Government have first responded by saying, "Never, never". The protest has continued and a few months later the Government have replied "Not yet". In yet another few months they have admitted the demand of their critics in principle and taken some of the action demanded, though much too little and much too late. This was our experience with evacuation, with the reform of the Air Ministry, with the provision of interceptors, with the purchase of food reserves, with the demand for a Ministry of Civilian Defence. In the question of a Ministry of Supply we have now reached the "Not yet" stage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On April 20 the Government announced its intention to create a Ministry of Supply in view of the great increase in the territorial forces which had just been decided. This is an admission in principle of the benefits of a Supply Ministry, but the present proposal is limited to Army supplies and certain essential materials used by the fighting Services. The case for a Ministry with a wider range, as proposed here, remains, and is indeed even stronger than before.

*Reserves of Food and Raw Materials*

From the industrial revolution to the Great War the most dangerous weakness in the strategic position of Great Britain was its dependence upon imported supplies of food and raw materials. This is the Achilles' heel of a densely populated, industrialised island. It is against this weakness that the German submarine campaign, which came near at one stage to determining the issue of the last war, was directed.

The danger from this weakness remains, though another and more novel danger now makes the first claim on our attention. For though we have improved our methods against the submarine, the menace of the aeroplane both to ships and to docks more than offsets this advantage. Our ships are fewer, we have 4 million more people to feed. Our home production, taking all forms of food into account, still suffices for only between a quarter and a third of our needs, and is itself largely dependent upon imports of feeding stuffs and fertilisers. Our current stocks are also small, as they were before the last war, ranging from an average of a few weeks to about three months.

We cannot meet this danger except by the provision of food reserves on a much greater scale than anything that has yet been done. The command of the sea is no sufficient answer. That in any case is essential, for we cannot store enough supplies to see us through a long war without any imports at all. But in the last war our command of the sea was as complete as we can ever hope that it will be. It enabled us to continue to import, but not to import on the same scale as before. We must therefore expect that our imports, though not cut off, will be again greatly reduced.

Nor can an increase in home production, though that too is needed, cover more than a small part of what is required. Lord Astor pointed out some years ago that it

had cost us £7 millions a year to increase our production of wheat from 16 to 24 per cent, a mere 8 per cent of our consumption. The cost of raising it to more than about 30 per cent would be prohibitive. Recent measures designed to increase soil fertility may be more promising, but it would be long before the full results could be obtained, and even then they would be of limited dimensions.

I will not, however, argue the case in detail. The weight of authority is overwhelming and decisive. The support of Lord Astor, Mr. Christopher Turnor and Professor Stapledon is sufficient to show that home production will not be enough; while, that of Sir Roger Keyes shows that the Navy would welcome some relief on the strain imposed by its most onerous task. The evidence of civilian officials with experience of our supply system in the last war, like Sir William Beveridge and Lord Catto, is equally unanimous. I may perhaps be allowed to include myself, as I was Director of Ship Requisitioning, with the task of finding and allocating British ships for all services, and was thus in as good a position as anyone in the Government service to learn from my daily work what a reduction of imports meant to the whole of our war effort.

The need for food reserves has been urged for some years both in and out of Parliament, and in December 1936 the Government established a Food (Defence Plans) Department to consider food problems. The new Department was, however, indifferently staffed. Its very name suggested that its duty was rather to make plans than put them into effect. It was attached to the Board of Trade, but the responsibility for policy was assigned to the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, who had no staff working on the subject under his own control. This ambiguous relationship was retained till, on April 6th, 1939, the Prime Minister announced, in answer to a question I had put to him, that Mr. W. S. Morrison would henceforth assume the responsibility and would take over



the Food (Defence Plans) Department to assist him. Up to this date the Department had confined itself to the problems of distributing and rationing food, especially under the conditions of air attack, and the limited stocks they have purchased had been designed to meet the dislocation to be expected in the early period of a war, not an actual deficiency in total supply, which, of course, arises only at a later stage.

The task before the new Minister is at once of vital importance and of manageable dimensions. If we had extra stocks of different foods equivalent in total food value to a year's wheat, we should be reasonably secure even in a prolonged war against a serious reduction of imports. The initial purchases would, of course, be of a capital, non-recurrent nature, and they would be rightly paid for out of loan, not current taxation. The annual cost of such a provision, including both interest upon the capital expenditure and the expense of handling and turnover, would be only about £5 millions.

For this modest sum, about 1 per cent of our defence expenditure, we could assure ourselves against a vital danger ; relieve the strain on the Navy ; and reduce the burden on our foreign exchange in war-time. And, if action is decided upon, it could be carried through quickly. We have an exceptionally good opportunity at the moment because of the present surplus and low prices of wheat.

To a large extent we can choose whichever essential foods store best,—canned goods, fats and sugar for example,—though substantial supplies of wheat and flour will also be desirable. For ships can, within certain limits, be switched over from one kind of cargo-service to another ; so that, if we have large supplies of sugar at the outbreak of war we can use the ships that would otherwise bring sugar to bring wheat.

The same considerations which have just been set out as regards food, apply equally to those raw materials

which need to be imported from abroad. We shall be equally dependent upon raw materials for the continuance of our war effort, and indeed many materials will be required in largely increased quantities for use as the basis of munitions. To a large extent these essential raw materials are imported in ships which could at choice be used for bringing either raw materials or food. We ought indeed to treat the question of reserves of whatever needs to be imported as a single problem. We should decide to what extent we ought to provide against a reduction of importing capacity, and then choose what to store. In making this important choice we should apply a composite criterion made up of these three questions : (a) how far can the particular commodity be stored without deterioration ; (b) how distant is the source of supply ; and (c) what is the price and available amount of the commodity at the time ?

Imports of non-ferrous metals will, for example, be certainly required ; they store well, they come, in some cases, from a long distance ; and the ships required to carry them can be equally used for wheat. If therefore we lay in a large reserve in peace, we can treat it as a wheat reserve because at the outbreak of war we can use ships otherwise required for the metals to bring wheat instead.

It is therefore highly regrettable that the Government, in spite of strongly pressed advice, refused to extend the scope of the Essential Commodities Act of 1938 to cover any commodities beyond food, fertilisers and petroleum. But the additional powers could be quickly obtained.

## CHAPTER VI

### ECONOMIC ADAPTATION AND THE PUBLIC

WE have discussed how industry should be mobilised to make our armaments. This, however, is only half the problem. The other half is—how can the rest of our economic life be enabled to carry on under war conditions.

A “total” war, which includes among its instruments the bombing aeroplane, will affect all the activities of the country as no previous war has ever done. This necessitates an *economic adaptation* to these conditions.

A few examples will serve to suggest what is needed. If the London docks are largely out of action, if Covent Garden is unusable, if a large part of the population have moved, and require to be fed, through a wide periphery of the Home Counties, what changes need be made in our system of food distribution? Doubtless, the Government is arranging for extra stocks in certain suitable places to help during the first dislocation, but the changes I have mentioned might continue throughout the war. The food distribution system must be adapted to meet these conditions, with new markets and supply centres; and there must be nothing to hold it up.

For instance, it is obvious that the movement of food must not be held up because the risk may be, on an ordinary calculation of profit and loss, an uneconomic one. At the beginning of the last war, shipping was for the moment at a standstill because the new war risk was at first not covered by insurance. Happily, an insurance scheme had been prepared and was quickly put into operation, so that the difficulty was soon ended. The risk was then, however, only at sea; now it is inland as

well. Unless insurance is at once adapted or replaced by some form of compensation, it may act disastrously in one of two different ways. A consignment of food may not be moved to its market because the risk involved, on an ordinary calculation of profit and loss, would not be covered by the prices obtainable at its destination. Conversely, however, a fully war-insured stock of a valuable commodity might be left by its owner in a too vulnerable store because he would have no monetary inducement to move it, as in the national interest it certainly ought to be moved to a safer area. Compensation is being planned for stationary property that may be destroyed, but it is even more essential to provide for goods in transit ; otherwise a large part of indispensable economic activity might be arrested. The Food (Defence Plans) Department is dealing with the many difficulties created by air warfare for food distribution, and in this task, as distinct from that of securing the food to distribute, it has made good progress. The particular difficulty, however, to which I have referred, that of goods in transit, applies not only to food but to raw materials and every commodity which needs to be moved either to an industry or to a market. It is much too vast to be dealt with by insurance in the ordinary sense, and though the services of the insurance companies will have to be used, they will have to act as the agents of the Government, who can alone cover risks of the magnitude involved, though the Government might reimburse itself by a special levy on owners. It is unlikely, however, that in the case of our main supplies any form of compensation for individual owners will suffice. Normally these supplies come in as consignments to individual firms, on ships bound for different specific ports where the owners make their separate arrangements for transport to their respective centres of distribution. In war, however, a dozen ships that would normally be proceeding to different destinations will be grouped in a convoy and taken to the same destination. More than that, this destination may

have to be kept secret, and perhaps changed at the last moment. How are the different consignments to be sorted out and sent to their individual owners, perhaps crossing each other on the way, without enormous waste and delay? Are we not compelled to arrange that the different firms dealing with each class of commodity shall act as one, and therefore as agents of the State? This of course involves not only a vast responsibility for the Government service, but also an internal organisation of the businesses concerned so as to enable them to act as if, in each class of work, they had been merged into one huge concern. This is not quite so formidable, however, as it might appear at first sight, for there has already been a considerable measure of such integration into large units and for the rest the experience of the last war is available.

Then again there is the whole question of the transfer of movable enterprises from the most dangerous districts, which is discussed in the following chapter. The headquarters of insurance companies, financial houses and many others, are now in the centre of London for reasons of prestige, advertisement or, at the most, convenience. They are not rooted to the spot by industrial plant, and their work could be done, and in war-time will have to be done, in the provinces. Many merchants and dealers in commodities will similarly find it best to conduct their operations from the smaller towns. Banks will decentralise their work to their branches, and so on, and their securities, with duplicates of their central records, will need to be sent away beforehand. Many shops will lose the greater part of their business, and some of them nearly all of it. Steps must be taken not only to house but to give long-term financial support to those of their evacuated employees who cannot be otherwise absorbed.

These are only a few instances, which might easily be multiplied, of the far-reaching economic adaptation which modern warfare will necessitate.

The point which we need to stress is that this process will require a co-operation between the Government service and the public which is beyond all previous experience. Steps such as have just been mentioned are impracticable without quick and vigorous action from both sides. Businesses need to be told from which, and to which, districts they shall go. Otherwise many of the less apprehensive directors will keep their staffs and records, while others with no greater reason to go will move ; and the more active directors will lease buildings in the country which they will subsequently find are needed by the Government for other purposes. At the same time very active measures, and indeed initiative, is required well beforehand by the businesses themselves. They alone can remove or duplicate their records and arrange office and housing accommodation for their employees.

Now if we attempt, with the aid of these few illustrations, to picture the vast scale of the arrangements that will be required, we shall, I think, conclude that the Government, and its existing administration, are probably not adequate either to carry out the part of the work which falls to themselves, or to take the required initiative to see that private enterprise makes the arrangements which it alone can carry through effectively. The task is one that exceeds anything ever yet entrusted in peace time to a Civil Service. And we must remember that the present departmental organisation was arranged with a view to altogether different work. The Civil Servant's experience of peace work does not equip him for war preparations. In some respects it even handicaps him. For work in a particular sphere under peace conditions develops instincts and methods appropriate to those conditions that make it difficult to acquire the perspective which the prospect of war necessitates. It is often easier for a fresh mind to acquire specialised knowledge of the particular subject than for the expert to change his perspective. The record of Air Raid Precautions confirms these comments.

When we are considering the lamentable delays of at least three years, from 1935 onwards, we must not assign the whole responsibility to Ministers. The permanent service must bear some share of it, though we may perhaps consider that more was required of it than can be reasonably expected of any public service.

The whole administrative machine of civil government must now clearly make it a main preoccupation to plan the vast economic adjustments which air warfare requires. But that is not enough. The machine must be both strengthened and supplemented.

In the first place, the Civil Service should, I think, at once reinforce its personnel ; at the top with leading men in industry and science, and throughout its ranks with young men of energy and constructive ability. Some of these should be specialists and others who, while without specialised experience, have a trained and adaptable intelligence. It will be quite useless merely to recruit at the bottom of the administrative and other classes. This reinforcement was, last time, done during the war. It must now be done at once, in a period which as regards civilian war measures must resemble a war period more than one of secure peace. This accession of strength from outside will, of course, be in one respect more difficult than in a war, because private enterprise will be more jealous of sparing its best men, and indeed there is plenty of war preparation work for most of them in their present businesses. But to some extent this strengthening is essential. There is, however, another method than that of full transfer which could be used on a larger scale. There are some scores of competent men of energy and constructive ability and useful specialised knowledge in some of the finance and other houses in the City of London who should certainly be transferred in war to the Government service, where they would be infinitely more valuable than as combatants. It could be arranged for them to be at once associated with appropriate Depart-

ments on a part-time basis. It would in that case be essential for them to be assured of adequate status and appropriate work ; and they must be safeguarded from the possible jealousy of subordinate officers. They should, I suggest, be given temporary status of the rank which would, with average luck, have been reached by a Class I officer of the same age.

### *Private Initiative*

Even thus reinforced, however, the Government service will certainly not suffice to supply all the initiative required. The task is much too vast. The constructive ability, the initiative and the organisation of private enterprise must be enlisted. I think that a radically different conception is required of the relation between the Government and those engaged in vital services. It is not enough for the leaders in these services to respond to Governmental initiative, or to co-operate when asked. They must feel a primary responsibility themselves for seeing that their services are enabled to carry on under conditions of air warfare. They must plan in detail what they think necessary, while of course keeping in touch with the Government's plan and responding to any official requests, and they must put collective pressure upon the Government to secure that whatever official action is needed is in fact taken. To do this they would need, within their respective spheres, to create representative working bodies which could plan and speak to the authorities collectively as a unit. In the later stages of the last war all the main industries and services were organised, in this sense, on what may be called a "corporate" basis. They could deal with the Government as a unit and transmit policy throughout the whole respective services with which they were concerned. What was then done halfway through the war now needs to be done before war comes.



These considerations apply to all the industries which are providing services which would remain essential in war but might be greatly affected by the conditions of air warfare. Those which first occur to the mind are such services as transport (by rail or road), gas, electricity, water and drainage, and food supply. Much has already been done in these cases, and the new Bill of April 1939 will facilitate further progress. But more would have been done, and more quickly, if the leaders had not waited for a Government initiative, and had been equipped by their internal organisation to consider collectively, each in their own sphere, what was needed to enable them to carry on under war conditions and to present plans and demands to the Government with a collective authority. In other words, arrangements would have begun sooner, and would now proceed more quickly, if the leaders of such enterprises regarded themselves as directly and primarily responsible for seeing that the conditions are established which will enable them to carry on in war, and were ready at all times not merely to respond to a Government initiative, but to take the initiative themselves, and to do so together. For this purpose the peace-time organisations in different spheres of industry are often unsuitable. They have been formed for different purposes and their personnel is often not the best for the present task. What is needed is that in each main sphere of economic activity a few of the most active people should create a small working committee which would be imaginative and enterprising enough to plan what is wanted and at the same time sufficiently trusted to carry the leaders of the whole industry with them.

#### *Economists and Financiers*

The same principle,—that the public, as specialised in their different pursuits, should organise themselves to contribute to the general war effort,—applies with some

modifications over a much wider sphere. Economists and financiers and scientists, for example, all have expert knowledge and aptitudes which are required for a wide range of novel problems and are not being adequately utilised at present. The Treasury are, for instance, doubtless studying what changes of financial policy and method are required by the increase of armaments expenditure ; what changes will be necessary for the conduct of war ; what changes may be needed to meet the conditions created by the German economic system and a possible intensive German drive on foreign markets ; and such questions as the whether and when the exchanges and both home and foreign investments should be controlled. It is, however, probable that experts both in the City and economists could make a contribution, and this would be much more valuable if they organised themselves so as to see how far a collective opinion on some of these problems is possible. Among the other work which similar experts could do I will only suggest one. A small organisation which would collect, collate and assess the vast amount of information available to London through private channels as to the economic situation, as it develops, in Germany, Italy and Japan, the state of their raw material stocks and any signs of economic dislocation, would be extremely useful. There is of course a Government Department dealing with such questions, but it would doubtless welcome the aid of an external organisation which would enable its net to be cast wider. Economists might well take the initiative in making the required arrangements, while of course establishing an official contact.

There is also similar work to be done in the political sphere. A great deal of information comes into London from personal sources as to the internal political condition, especially of Germany. Most of it is dispersed, only a part of it reaches the Government. It would be well worth while to set up an appropriate com-

mittee, with a small permanent staff, to collect, collate and study continuously all information of this kind and to make the results known to the Government and in part to the public. This is also closely related to the question of how we can best formulate a policy which would appeal to the German people and how we can get it to their knowledge.

### *Scientists*

Then there is the work of scientists. There are many outside those who are attached to the official service or habitually consulted by it. There never was a time when the contribution which the scientific ability of the country, of every kind, was so much needed. And scientists have their own nucleus of organisation, for example in the appropriate section of the British Association. Could they not, without waiting to be consulted on particular questions, take the initiative themselves of reviewing in turn the obvious problems in which scientific knowledge not as yet fully utilised would be valuable?

### *The General Public and the Air Raid Defence League*

Lastly, the general public, outside of such particular professions and occupations, has its own similar rôle in regard to civilian defence, in which the ordinary citizen is expected to co-operate. For this purpose an Air Raid Defence League has recently been formed. It aims at enrolling a large popular membership both of air wardens and others. Its purpose is, through appropriate technical committees, to consider suggestions and criticisms and to prepare plans for the different problems of air defence; to arouse and maintain popular attention and to insist that air defence shall have its proper place in the general defence system; and both to co-operate with and exert pressure upon the Government. The need for such an

organisation has been sufficiently shown in earlier pages. It is to be hoped that it will be widely supported.

It will be said that what is here proposed would entail a great deal of work which is already being done by the Government or by other persons outside the Government on their invitation. But I am, of course, contemplating that there would be the closest possible contact with the Government which the latter will allow, and that those who are planning on their own initiative will respond to every official invitation and collaborate to the utmost extent. The more their work can be taken over and embodied in official plans and the official planning organisation the better. But for the reasons I have given, I think it is essential that what is being done within the official machine should be supplemented and stimulated by outside initiative.

I have thus contemplated planning within each key service or profession which has experience relevant to our war problem, through committees created specially by private initiative for the purpose. But, of course, the work done separately in this way will need to be co-ordinated, and to be all dominated by the same general conception and to be guided by similar principles. Perhaps the establishment of a new Economic Defence Institute would be desirable for this purpose. But if so, it would perhaps be a pity, in view of the institutions which already exist, if this had to be created from altogether new elements and financed entirely by specially raised funds. The Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), Political and Economic Planning (P.E.P.) and the recently created Institute for Social and Economic Research, are all doing much work which is of the same kind as what is now proposed. They have efficient organisations, which it has taken some time to build up ; they have highly expert staffs ; they have financial resources ; above all, they have invaluable knowledge and experience as to who are the best people to bring together for a particular problem.

They are therefore surely indispensable for what is now needed. One difficulty must, however, be faced. These institutions are of a permanent character and designed for work under normal peace conditions. They have all of them had, for obvious reasons, to be careful about entering into the sphere of what is politically controversial or coming into direct opposition with the Government. They have developed certain rules and traditions, somewhat different in the three cases, to safeguard themselves against this danger. What is now required necessarily involves an exercise of pressure, a stimulus and a critical attitude to what the Government is doing, or failing to do, which would be inconsistent with their present rules and practice. Something new therefore is needed. If a new Institute is formed, it is greatly to be hoped that these existing institutions would, in this grave national emergency, collaborate in the most generous way, allowing and encouraging their staff to assist and give their services without charge. Alternatively, if no new Institute is created, much of the work might be farmed out between the three institutions. In this case, however, it would be essential that they should make arrangements which would enable their staffs to work under an improvised authority which would disengage the responsibility of the permanent institution ; the staffs should thus be exempted from the rules which properly limit the extent to which these institutions allow themselves, in their normal peace-time work, to be committed to views on policy.

### *Long-Term and General Problems*

We have so far considered action that must be quickly taken and completed. But on a longer view of our future, more intractable difficulties need to be dealt with. It is clear, for example, for both social and strategic reasons, that a large measure of industrial decentralisation is required. The most congested areas are also the most

vulnerable, so that the same change would serve both purposes. Obviously such a transformation must be slow and difficult. The more reason for it to be begun at once, since it is imperative. The Government have met the demand for action by the appointment of a Royal Commission, which is working, slowly, cumbrously and elaborately, and which was encouraged on the wrong path by a Board of Trade memorandum inspired by the *laissez-faire* principles of the Victorian era. The Commission's chief contribution seems likely to be, as perhaps it was intended to be, to provide an excuse for the postponement of any effective action. It may produce some proposals which can be put into practice. But the fact is that the knowledge already available, plus common sense and some constructive energy, would be quite enough to secure that many things clearly right should be done, and many things obviously wrong should be prevented. The first need is to draw up a general plan as to where it would be desirable to attract industries of different kinds and in what areas it is desirable to secure a reduction of such industries. Possibly a fuller plan can be made when the Royal Commission has reported, but already it could easily be substantial enough to afford all the guidance required for any practicable action in the next few years. Such a general plan, once made (and of course gradually elaborated afterwards), should then be used as a guide for the influence which the Government does or can exercise. This is of several kinds. In some instances, financial inducements could be given. In others, the knowledge that Government orders would be more likely to be allotted to a factory placed in a site officially approved would be sufficient. But it would be quite reasonable that permits should be required before a new industry could be established in the most congested and vulnerable areas and that such permits should only be given in exceptional circumstances.

If we take the whole record of the last eight years, the Government so far has done rather less than nothing. It has often set a bad example itself. The notorious case of the Air Ministry proposing to place an aeroplane factory at White Waltham, in flagrant disregard not only of amenities but of the most obvious strategic considerations, is only one instance of many. The Government has made some attempt to persuade industrialists to establish themselves in the depressed areas rather than near London, but the financial attractions are rarely sufficient ; de-rating, for example, relieves specified classes of industries in congested as well as other areas ; and no powers of prohibition have been asked for. More than this, in one important sphere of policy, the Government has largely counteracted an economic force which would otherwise tend to decentralisation. They have given a housing subsidy to relieve the burden of higher rents in congested areas. They have thus removed the inducement to move out which the necessity of paying higher wage-rates in such areas would have afforded. It would have been easy to devise a system under which an industry ready to move out would have received a subsidy equivalent to what would otherwise have been the cost of relieving the rents paid by its workers. As it is, the Government's policy creates a new and potent force which counteracts the natural economic factors that would otherwise operate in favour of reducing congestion in vulnerable areas. And such a force is much more effective than idle words of advice or persuasion unaccompanied by either financial attraction or compulsory powers.

We need then, as I hope these few illustrations will have shown, first to adapt our economic system quickly, so that all the essential activities of the country can be carried on if war comes soon. And if war is now averted, we need to work gradually to make our economic system permanently less vulnerable. For both of these tasks the Government and those engaged in private enterprise

will need to co-operate. But it will not be enough for the latter to do what they are asked when they are asked. They must take the initiative. All engaged in carrying on a service which would remain essential in war must feel personally and collectively responsible for seeing that arrangements are made which will enable that service to continue under war conditions—and for putting pressure on the Government to secure whatever official action is required for that purpose.



## CHAPTER VII

### AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS

INTERCEPTOR aeroplanes, anti-aircraft guns, and balloon barrages may greatly reduce the proportion of bombers which could get safely here and back, and the number of days or weeks during which air bombardment could be sustained. It is happily untrue that the "bomber will always get through". Nevertheless a great number of bombers *will* get through, and the destruction caused at least in the early stage of a war will be very great. If there is a corresponding loss of life, it is difficult to calculate the effect upon the public morale and even upon the physical possibility of continuing the work required to carry on the war.

For these, as well as for humanitarian reasons, an enormous effort is obviously necessary to give the utmost possible protection to the civilian population.

We have discussed the futilities of the A.R.P. measures up to the time of the September crisis and the recent changes in organisation. The new Minister, Sir John Anderson, has outlined his new policy, which may perhaps be fairly summarised as follows. He prefers in general "dispersal", with partial protection, at home to "concentration" in great communal bombproof shelters. He makes a distinction between the measures of protection to be given to people when at home, when in the streets, and when in their places of work. For the first he is arranging the strengthening of basements, or, alternatively, the provision of small steel shelters. For the second there are to be trenches and perhaps some other forms of shelter. For the third, the responsibility is placed upon employers to provide shelters under or near their works. There is to be a

limited measure of evacuation, primarily of children, from dangerous areas. And at the same time the measures for dealing with gas, fire and casualties are to be perfected. There is, in the immediate plans, practically no provision for deep bombproof shelters, though this question is still under consideration. The policy is aimed at giving the greatest practicable protection against air attacks in the near future and at the same time enabling the main economic life and activity of the country to continue. A "troglodyte" life is regarded as inconsistent with this second purpose.

These proposals certainly represent a substantial advance upon anything planned before Sir John's appointment. There has also been a considerable progress in departmental reorganisation and arrangements to deal with the evacuation of children and apparently also the reinforcement and equipment of fire-brigades, etc.

We need now to consider whether this policy is adequate or whether it needs in important respects to be modified or supplemented.

In dealing with this part of my subject I have the advantage of using the studies of the Air Raid Defence League, to which I have contributed ; and much of what follows will be in substance a summary of the League's policy as set out in its bulletins. For whatever is not contained in those bulletins I am alone responsible.

### *Principles of Civilian Defence against Air Attack*

No experience in other countries gives more than a partial indication of what is to be expected in a war between Great Powers with large air forces. We are bound, however, to make the best picture we can of the character of the attacks likely to come, from such evidence as is available.

We must expect attack from aircraft in the form of high

explosives, incendiary and gas bombs ; and these will be directed both against the civilian population in large towns and also against communications, individual plants, docks and stores of essential commodities. In a word, all centres of population and of industrial activity are in a war zone. It may be too that, as in Spain, low-flying aeroplanes with machine-guns will attack undefended villages so as to impede agricultural production.

The attacks will have a double purpose. They will aim at destroying the morale of the nation and so causing a political upheaval which might lead to surrender. They will also aim at dislocating economic activity and so paralysing the general combatant effort.

The raids are likely to be of two kinds, though the distinction between them is not an absolute one. There will be large mass raids, in which several hundreds of bombing planes will come over at once or in recurrent attacks at short intervals. These would probably not be continued for a very long period, though they might last for some days or even weeks. There are likely also, however, to be raids by smaller numbers of planes, first on one area and then on another, over periods of months, and possibly throughout the war, or until the attacked country has obtained a decisive mastery in the air. These smaller raids will aim both at demoralising work through keeping the population in a state of tension ; at dislocating economic activity by driving workers constantly to shelter ; and at distracting our defensive effort by changes in the point of attack.

To meet this danger we have, apart from reprisals, both combatant (or active) and non-combatant (or passive) measures of defence. Anti-aircraft guns will take their toll ; balloon barrages will keep the attacking planes high ; fighters, or interceptors, will attack the bombers. The passive defence consists of black-outs ; of evacuation of the most dangerous areas ; shelters of many types ; gas-masks and decontamination squads ;

enlarged fire-brigades; and medical arrangements to deal with casualties.

It is difficult to guess the scale upon which casualties are likely to be inflicted. The experiences in Spain and in China afford only a partial analogy, since both the attack and the defence were on so much smaller a scale and the natural conditions of the places bombed were very different from those of towns in England. The situation is also changing constantly as the combatant measures, both of attack and defence, develop. Professional opinion, moreover, differs considerably as to the efficacy of the several means of defence, anti-aircraft guns, interceptors, balloons, etc., under varying conditions of weather. It is sufficient on this point to remark that combatant defensive measures have apparently made appreciable progress in the last six months, and within a few months should substantially increase the loss to any attacking force, as well as damaging the morale of the pilots. Nevertheless, at the best, it must be expected that large numbers of bombers will get through, especially in the early period of the war, and that the casualties will be on a great scale, though they are capable of being much reduced by passive defence measures.

The small steel shelters are in course of delivery, but it will be several months before they are all installed. They cannot be installed in many of the most vulnerable and congested areas, where the Government rely mainly upon the strengthening of basements.

As a complement to shelter policy the Government are arranging a measure of evacuation from certain areas. For this purpose they have divided the country into three broad categories: evacuation areas, from which some classes of the population should move; reception areas, to which they shall go; and neutral areas, where the population should remain as it is. Definite arrangements have, however, actually only been made by the Government to evacuate children, with the mothers for those

under school age, though there is a suggestion that invalids and old people should be added. For the rest, some provision of transport and of extra food, etc., is being apparently contemplated for people who leave by their own initiative, but no definite evacuation appears to have been arranged by the Government.

The first comment that suggests itself is that the general division of the country into these categories according to risk is much too broad a classification. There are zones within those areas where the risk, and need for protection, is immensely greater than the average for the whole area. The zone from the Docks and the East End along each side of the river to Victoria has, for example, quite obviously a much stronger claim for additional protection, beyond anything now included in the Government policy, than St. John's Wood or Hampstead. In this zone the congestion is greatest; steel shelters can only occasionally be installed; basements are rarely suitable; the military objectives are most attractive; the river is a guide. In many other parts of London steel shelters and basements may reduce the risk to tolerable dimensions, but certainly not here. In such a zone additional measures are essential.

In general, the scale upon which the Government is contemplating evacuation — or what I should prefer to call “organised dispersal” — is quite inadequate. All experience suggests that, after some days or weeks of bombardment, the population of the most dangerous districts will be inevitably reduced to not more than a third. It may be by a process of organised dispersal; or it may be by a combination of death and panic flight; but that is the only choice we have.

The criterion which the Government adopt in determining the scale of evacuation, indeed, seems to show a lack of perspective. They have enquired what accommodation is available in the reception areas, having regard to what are considered tolerable housing standards; and

they regard this as setting a limit to the practicable evacuation. It is an interesting example of the strength of departmental traditions. A department engaged in raising and maintaining standards of housing has a professional disinclination to making arrangements which involve a breach of its own standards ; and the task of dealing with a war problem is a novel one which has had no time to develop its own traditions. But surely it is obvious that 'this is the wrong way round to see the question. We ought to consider who should leave the most dangerous zones, on a balance of national interest, and then make the best practicable arrangements to deal with them. Special camps may give some relief, though those now planned only touch a negligible fraction, 17,500 in all, and with whatever extension could only cover a small proportion. For the rest, housing standards must be regarded as flexible. It is better to be crowded than to be killed.

Enough has been said to indicate the general perspective in which we should consider our policy for protection against high explosives.

What, then, shall be the main principles of a reasonable policy ? Should we attempt to provide complete bomb-proof shelters, if not for all, at least for all in dangerous areas ? We must take account of some very important considerations, not hitherto discussed, before we attempt an answer. A modern bomber travels five miles in a minute. It may be possible to detect it a hundred miles, or a little more, away before it arrives over England, so that the combatant defence forces may get twenty to twenty-five minutes' warning. But it is quite impossible that the public should have anything approaching this time to get into whatever form of protection may be available. For bombers a hundred miles off may be bound for any part of the country. If everyone took shelter every time bombers started, it is obvious that a comparatively small fleet in successive units could make

all work impossible. The Government have quite rightly therefore arranged a double system of warnings, a distant one which will be communicated only to the defence forces, and a near one to the public in the area for which the bombers are seen later to be making. If the warning is so arranged as to give only seven minutes it must be given when the bomber is as far as thirty-five miles away. Even in that case therefore a very large proportion of the public warned will be in areas which will not in fact be attacked. The time could not be much extended without causing intolerable dislocation. We must therefore think of all our shelter policy as subject to the absolute condition that people must be able to get into shelters within seven minutes ; and we must remember that the attacks may come at night, when we must allow in this period for waking and dressing. We must also think of the conditions under which a hastily aroused and dressed, undisciplined, and frightened public, would have to reach shelters in darkened streets, possibly obstructed with debris from previous raids. It is clear from these considerations that shelters which are at a considerable distance from many of those for whom they are intended might be worse than useless. The public would be in the most dangerous place of all, the open street, when the bombs fell. There would be panic and demoralisation, and many might be crushed to death who were never within bomb range at all. If, however, deep shelters are to be near at hand for all who use them, they cannot be very large except in very densely populated areas. On the other hand, if they are very numerous and small, the cost per head might rise to a prohibitive level, and we might well secure more protection from the same expenditure of money and effort on shelters which give less protection than the deep shelter, though more than the small steel type, and on combatant defensive measures. Indeed, to whatever form of protection we turn, we find advantages which make them obviously desirable under certain conditions, and disadvantages which make

them unsuitable under other conditions. We need a balanced policy in which they will all have their place. Space forbids me to discuss the question fully, and I must refer the reader to the series of Air Raid Defence Bulletins. I will content myself with summarising the main principles of the policy which personally I think is practicable and reasonable in the circumstances as we know them.

The most seriously difficult shelter problem is that of London, the great towns, the great industrial cities and munitions areas, and the immediate vicinity of docks and objects of military importance. Large numbers here should be evacuated into less dangerous areas. Of the rest, many are in districts where the small steel shelters can be suitably installed and where there is a sufficient degree of dispersal to make the risk of a direct or near hit a tolerable one, certainly much less than in the most dangerous zones, whatever additional protection is given for these zones. In other districts basement-strengthening may give equal protection and reduce the risk similarly. Where this is possible it is desirable, because the disturbance and possible demoralisation involved in going downstairs is immensely less than any form of external shelter must entail. But it is not yet altogether certain what protection is in fact given by the strengthening of different kinds of basement; little progress has been made with surveys; still less with actual work. The most intensive effort is therefore required at once, in survey and in pressing on the actual work.

There are, however, many districts in which neither steel shelters nor basements are suitable, or in which the prospect of continuous raiding is so serious, and the population so congested, that protection only against blast and splinter is inadequate. The zones which thus require extra measures need immediate determination. The most obvious is the East End of London along the river. In such a zone prior arrangements should be made to evacuate all except those whose



work must continue, and must continue where it is now. Businesses such as insurance companies and most of those which constitute the City could, and should, be asked to arrange to transfer their work to less vulnerable areas. For the diminished numbers of people that remain, shelters which are proof, where possible, against direct hits or in any case against near hits as well as blast and splinter, should be provided. There are zones in other parts of the country in which for similar reasons special measures not needed in other parts of the evacuation areas would be necessary. Zoning within the present three large categories is therefore needed, but action should not wait till classification is complete. There are some zones which are obviously of the highest degree of vulnerability. Action should begin in these at once, without waiting till all decisions have been reached for more doubtful cases. We must indeed work gradually towards the principle of "equality of protection for comparable risk", but speed is the first necessity.

### *Deep Shelters*

Nor should we think in terms of two simple categories of "shallow shelters" and "deep shelters". There are intermediate types, for example, concrete pill-boxes which protect against nearer hits than the steel shelters, etc., and many different forms of shelter for different types of locality. It is better to experiment and encourage local variations appropriate to soil and other conditions than to spend months on trying to find the best single type of standardised heavily protected shelter. To take one example only, there are regions where tunnelling is better than underground excavation.

Then, again, special areas have other forms of special needs. In munition areas it may be well to provide shelter for use in working hours of a kind which gives better protection than the small steel shelter or ordinary strengthened basement; and in addition to have full

bombproof shelters for sleep and respite out of working hours.

A further class of protection needs special comment. Protection will be required not only at home, or at work, but also for people caught in the streets. This will doubtless take the form partly of refuge in trenches, partly of access to strengthened basements under large buildings, partly of specially constructed deep shelters. In any event one thing is essential. Shelter of one kind or another must be provided for all likely to be in each region. Calculations must be made of the peak population by day, allowing for reduction through evacuation and diminished traffic under war conditions ; and then every street must have permanent and clear notices saying to which shelter people in that street should go if caught in a raid. If that is not done, congestion, and panic rushes, with a heavy toll of death through crushing even in districts far away from any actual bombs, is inevitable.

Deep shelters will in addition be clearly necessary for medical, telephone and other essential services.

In carrying out work of the kind involved in such a policy, every practicable effort should of course be made to make it serve other useful purposes. In the construction of trenches, many of the unemployed in building, road-making and similar occupations can be used ; out of work miners could be used for tunnelling. Some of the shelters could also serve permanent peace purposes, for example as car parks, and in a number of cases work of this kind could be appropriately put in hand at once. Over a long period even more ambitious schemes might well be undertaken, such as an underground central terminus for London, the extension of Tubes, even underground arterial roads (in substitution for some of the Bresssey proposals). For the most part, however, we cannot afford either the money, the effort, the materials or the time to engage in such work in the immediate future, when the full national resources must be devoted to overcoming a danger that may mature soon and might be mortal.

The policy thus inadequately sketched here and developed more fully in the League Bulletins, would, I believe, give such protection as is practicable against the danger of attack by high-explosive bombs at an early date. I have not attempted to cover more than this part of the A.R.P. task.

There is also, of course, the problem of incendiary bombs and of gas ; the organisation and duties of air raid wardens ; the fire-brigade services ; the decontamination squads ; the whole of the medical arrangements to deal with casualties. I have omitted any discussion of these, not because I fail to recognise their importance, but because I have no suggestions on main principle to make, and detailed discussion of the Government's measures would be at once too technical and too lengthy to fall within the scope of this book.

It is in the policy for evacuation and for shelters that questions of main principle arise. It seems to me clear that, in spite of the considerable progress made since Sir John Anderson was appointed, the scale of our effort is still inadequate and the pace too slow. I am not suggesting that what the Government is doing should be changed in character, but only that it should be expedited and supplemented.

The policy I have suggested is not impracticable or an impossibly expensive one. I am advocating additional measures of civilian defence for only a comparatively small proportion of the population whose need is exceptional. For more than four-fifths, for perhaps nearly nine-tenths of the country, the Government policy, when fully in operation, may, in conjunction with the improvement of the combatant defence, afford reasonable protection. There remain perhaps about five million people, engaged for the most part in vital services, who will be subject to a still intolerable risk ; and perhaps three or four millions, whose work is either non-essential or could be conducted in less dangerous

areas, who should be moved. The order of magnitude of the capital expenditure involved by these additional measures would be perhaps £100 million, equivalent in annual cost, with maintenance, to perhaps £5 millions a year. The fact is, that when we are thinking of expensive deep shelters we should have in our mind only a few congested and vulnerable patches in the country. The task is vital and urgent, but it is manageable.

It will be well, in conclusion, to recall the rewards of success in the effort we are called on to make. With the extension of our passive defence and the improvement of our combatant defence we can make it certain, alike to ourselves and to any potential aggressor, that a quick knock-out blow cannot succeed. The whole of diplomacy is then placed upon the plane of the relative strength and resources for a long conflict, in which our chances are even now much more favourable. The greater danger of an immediate war, which arises from the temptation to gamble on the knock-out blow, would be eliminated. A cause which has long tended to paralyse our policy would be removed.

And there is a further reward, too, that is well within the range of possibility. The use of any instrument of war depends upon a calculation of profit and loss. The improvement of our combatant defence will ensure such loss to the attackers that, if we can simultaneously reduce our casualties, the use of bombing aircraft against large centres of the population may well begin to prove too expensive for its results. Then, at last, and probably not till then, we shall be able to return and negotiate, on a realistic basis, for the abolition of the bomber — and the elimination of the greatest threat of our time to civilisation. A few years ago we had hoped, and not without reason, to take an easier road to this goal ; but that road is now closed.

We have more painfully to hew out a more difficult path to our objective. But we can do so.

*Later Note.*—On April 20 Sir John Anderson announced that, in the opinion of the Government, the provision of “bomb-proof shelters on any general scale . . . would be a mistaken policy”, but that there was “a case for providing heavily protected shelter for certain key-points and certain vital services”. On the same day a Report was published of a conference which had been studying the shelter problem under the chairmanship of Lord Hailey.

The technical considerations set out in the Report, so far as they are relevant to the proposals in this chapter, had in fact been fully taken into account. The Government’s policy, however, while admitting in principle the need for heavily protected shelters in some cases, does not provide them for those special classes of the public whose claims I have urged.

In my view, therefore, it is still necessary to press the above recommendations upon the Government. The reasons for them, and their practicability, seem to me to have been confirmed by the further official evidence now available.

## CHAPTER VIII

### NATIONAL UNITY AND NATIONAL SERVICE

It has surely become clear that adequate defensive strength is impossible without a discipline and energy in industrial mobilisation, and a united action of all classes, for which some basis of political co-operation is necessary.

How can the requisite national unity be obtained? The increased prospects, and remaining difficulties, of political union can be summarised in a sentence. The conflicts upon the main issue of foreign policy may have almost ended, but the bitterness remains and with it a personal distrust of those responsible for a policy which they have now had to abandon. While the Government was in effect facilitating the destruction of the Spanish Republic by foreign arms through continued adherence to the non-intervention agreement in spite of the flagrant breaches of it by Germany and Italy, the attitude of the Opposition could only be one of bitter attack. That issue is now ended, but it has been ended by the defeat of the Spanish Government, and all the evidence at present available indicates that the opinion of the Opposition is more likely to prove right than that of the Government as to the consequences to our own national interests. The Government is now doubtless negotiating actively with Russia, as the Opposition have for years been urging that it should, but it is now doing so under less favourable conditions and with the handicap of its own record. Above all, the Government is now, under necessity, turning to the policy of uniting the countries which fear Axis domination by means of reciprocal engagements, but it is doing so at a time when such mutual aid in distress has less chance of giving collective security than if the League of

Nations system had been more consistently supported throughout the last eight years, as the Opposition had desired.

Will the Opposition be prepared under these conditions to combine with or support a Government led by those who have, as they may reasonably believe, been so clearly proved to be wrong? Can they forget the past — or even have trust in the future? For at any time an issue may arise between, let us say, a particular imperial interest and the defence of a democracy, in which, they may fear, the tendencies they have so long criticised may again appear.

Yet the replacement of the present Government by a Labour Government, or any Government formed from Opposition parties, would be impossible with this Parliament, and unlikely to result from a general election, and in any case an election at this moment would be open to serious objections.

### *A National Government?*

If there is to be political unity there are two alternatives. The first is the formation of a National Government on a broad basis. The second is the continuance of the present Government, though strengthened by a change of personnel, with an Opposition which would give its support on the main lines of policy and national effort, while continuing an independent criticism on other issues. That would at least be preferable to a gagged and fettered Opposition, with no effective influence as a minority within the Government; for, as earlier chapters have demonstrated, the national effort has profited by criticism and pressure and not been impeded by it.

If we have a period of continued but not increasing tension, the second alternative is perhaps more likely. But in any case it is essential that the personnel of the Government should be strengthened, both by addition and by resignations. We need now the best *executive* ability

available, not merely forensic ability, nor parliamentary ability, nor even peace-time administrative ability.

If there is such a period one interim measure might, I think, be very valuable. It is often impossible to decide what policy is right in a given case without calculating the strength required to make it effective, and some of the essential factors in such a calculation may be secret and necessarily secret. What has often happened is that the Government, with secret as well as public information in its possession, has decided not to go beyond a certain point in offering resistance to aggression. But a large part of Parliament, and of the country behind it, has not had sufficient confidence in the Cabinet to take it on trust that such a situation was made imperative by the facts of the situation. The Opposition has therefore demanded a stronger line, but it has done so without access to the secret information which may be a decisive factor, and in this sense its demands have been irresponsible.

I can see only one solution. The Government cannot make its secret information public, though it is quite likely under pressure to make statements, as it has sometimes done, which are damaging to the public interest and, in the eyes of foreign countries, may exaggerate alike our weakness, our pacifism and our disunion. Nor will, or should, the Government give its most intimate secrets to a full session of 600 members, meeting in so-called secret session — which may occasionally be possible in war but scarcely in peace. But Parliament could appoint a *Committee of Foreign Policy and Defence (or Public Safety)*, consisting of twenty or thirty of the most trusted members of all important parties and groups. To such a Committee all the secret information required for decisions could be given, and through such a Committee, with powers to argue and cross-question, an effective influence could be exerted. Membership of the Committee would require a pledge of secrecy as to the information given (if, but only if, it is not also publicly available from other



sources), but no more. Members would otherwise be free to criticise and attack both in Parliament and outside ; and parliamentary debates on Foreign Policy would still continue. But they would become more responsible ; for the rest of us, not on the Committee, while still free to form our own opinions and express them, would be largely guided by the judgement and attitude of whichever members of the Committee we most trusted.

Such a Committee would not be a Foreign Affairs Committee on the French model, for it would come to an end automatically either with the formation of a truly National Government, or with a return to a more normal international situation. In actual war we should doubtless have a National Government. In a period which is similar to one of war we should do well to have such a Government. But, if that is impracticable, we should in the meantime go as far as we can to obtain some of its advantages. A Committee so composed, and so exerting an influence upon the Government, would at least serve some of the purposes of a truly National Government and would prepare the way for the further step as soon as it should be required and practicable.

Under such conditions, the increasing unity in main policy, the intimate association of Ministers with leaders outside the Government on the Committee, and the co-operation, which is already forthcoming, between people of all parties throughout the country in every form of voluntary service, in recruiting organisations, and in all the forms of preparation against air attack, would all be serving much of the purpose, though not all, of a truly National Government — and would be facilitating the final development.

Such a truly National Government may, however, be indispensable, not only in actual war, but in any long period in which tensions tend to increase and war is always an imminent possibility. Let us then consider how it could be formed. The initial question is, of course,

that of the Prime Minister. Would his political opponents be prepared to serve under Mr. Chamberlain? The question involves his record and his personality, and the reactions of potential members of the Cabinet to both. It will be discussed in the succeeding chapter.

If we assume, however, for the moment that, whether by his own wish or through his inability to form a sufficiently broad Government, Mr. Chamberlain decides to resign, who is the alternative? It is obvious that the country cannot turn to any of those who are primarily responsible for the weaknesses in our present position, Lord Baldwin, Sir John Simon, Sir Samuel Hoare, Sir Thomas Inskip. Of these Sir John and Sir Samuel were as Foreign Ministers responsible for the most crucial and fatal errors in our foreign policy, before proceeding in turn to the Department where they neglected our civilian defence against the resulting dangers. There will, at the same time, be certain difficulties at a time like the present, intermediate between war and peace, in securing general agreement upon Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Churchill or Mr. Eden as head of the Government.

### *Lord Halifax*

There is only one among present Ministers who has been for a long period in office, and for a substantial period in the first rank. And in a Parliament with a large Conservative majority a new Labour Prime Minister who could retain the support of the Labour Party is scarcely possible. In present circumstances, therefore, a National combination would perhaps, if the present Prime Minister resigned, be more practicable under Lord Halifax than any other. That he is in the Lords is no insuperable obstacle. The needs of the country must override every technical consideration, and if necessary an Act of Parliament could give him a place in the Commons.

Lord Halifax in his personal qualities more closely re-

sembles Sir Edward Grey than any of his predecessors as Foreign Secretary. Like him he is impressive in presence and manner ; universally respected, even revered ; and he has a deep and sincere ethical and religious foundation for his character. Like him, too, he is quite obviously in politics under the impulse of a sense of duty and not of personal ambitions ; he would sooner live the life of a country gentleman. In India he showed an insight into the aspirations of another race and constructive qualities of a rare order ; and in his relations with Mr. Gandhi he was able to find in a similarity of religious temper a bridge for the wide gulf between different civilisations and creeds. He has, in his age, more than a decade's advantage of one kind over Mr. Eden, and of the opposite kind over Mr. Chamberlain. Those who hesitate about his suitability for the office of Prime Minister at a time like the present do so because they doubt whether his personal force is sufficient, whether he has a tough enough fibre in his will. The general force of his personality is less than that of Grey, and while he shares all the same personal qualities they are most of them on a somewhat lesser scale ; and for a particular objective he has a less concentrated strength than Mr. Chamberlain. Partly, however, for this very reason he is less compromised by his association with Mr. Chamberlain's earlier policy and less handicapped in any attempt to secure the co-operation of the Left.

It is possible that a Government of which he was the head, stiffened by the inclusion of Mr. Churchill as Minister of Defence, including Mr. Eden and also the ablest of the Labour leaders (in particular Mr. Morrison), and possibly associating Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Lloyd George as Ministers without portfolio, would best serve the country at this time. Mr. Attlee and other Labour leaders would, of course, be added, with some Liberals. And places could be found by the departure of the obviously unsuitable Ministers now in the Cabinet for some of

the best ability of the country, whether now in Parliament or (as in the case, for example, of Mr. Bevin or Lord Cadman) outside it. It might even be possible, with the assent of the Dominion Governments, to give the Cabinet a Commonwealth character by the inclusion of such personalities as General Smuts, Mr. Bruce and Mr. Bennett. If within such a Cabinet an inner executive, comparable in quality with the War Cabinet of 1917, were formed, the country might find an instrument of Government which would both impress the world and secure the maximum national effort at home.

### *National Service*

(a) *Personal*.—Special emphasis has been laid in this book upon the steps required to improve civilian defence against air attack. This is in part because the danger of a knock-out blow from the air has been the most immediate of our perils, partly because, as the problem is so largely within the sphere of civil administration, I have felt able to write about it without the special handicap a civilian suffers in dealing with problems of the fighting forces. Until this danger is dealt with, as it can be, it must continue to merit a certain priority over other questions. The grave events of recent months, however, have in some respects adversely affected the balance of forces even for a long war. The additional resources in materials and in industrial capacity that Germany will gain through her further seizures of territory this year, when added to what already resulted from Munich, are a new and important factor. And in addition all the evidence suggests that those of us who have consistently opposed the Government's policy in Spain are likely to prove right. Spanish bases are likely to be a threat both to ourselves and to France, even if Spain is not an actual combatant against us.

In these circumstances the line of defence which seemed the strongest has become less invulnerable than we had

hoped. The Maginot fortifications are strong. The defence, so assisted, has a great advantage over the offence. Even a two-to-one superiority in the assailant's forces might well fail to give him success. But the line might conceivably be turned, and the superiority might be greater than two to one. Can we continue to be confident that France's army will be sufficient, even if assisted by such forces, which are of very limited dimensions, as we are now in a position to put in the field within a short period? Can we be sure that she will hold the line, with only such assistance, till we can build up armies as we did in the last war? Can we even be certain that, with so dire a prospect, the spirit of France will stand the strain and that in the end we shall not be left alone to face a danger that we could not then meet with reasonable chances of success?

It may therefore be a matter of life and death for us and France alike that we should prepare to send, and send soon after the outbreak of war, a much larger trained and equipped force than we now have ready, or even that we should have when the thirty-two divisions, which seem to be indicated by Mr. Hore-Belisha's announcement this spring, are complete. Moreover, the present system does not provide adequate or rapid training for new recruits. We probably cannot send again an army equal in numbers to the one we had in France in 1917, since the numbers required to maintain supplies are now, as we have seen, much greater than then. But it seems likely that we shall have to provide as many as we can possibly find, and equip and supply, by making the fullest use of our national resources.

This grim prospect adds force to the arguments developed elsewhere in this book for a reorganisation of our industrial resources and an adaptation of our peacetime economy to the needs of war preparation. But it does more than this. It inevitably raises the question whether we can make the effort we now require upon the

basis of voluntary military service only. Must we resort in peace-time to conscription ?

If we shrink from this step it must not be through any under-estimate of our peril, or from any lingering belief, peculiar to ourselves, that conscription is inconsistent with either democracy or freedom or because of the traditions and habits of mind that we derive from our period of island immunity, now unhappily lost and irrecoverable.

We are alone in Europe in regarding conscription as no necessary part of the price of independence and freedom. We are alone in considering that a system which involves service for all is undemocratic. To France such an *idea* has always seemed not only unjustified but the precise opposite of the truth. Nor can we any longer afford the luxury of any system which reduces in any degree the full increase of our possible strength.

We must therefore examine the question solely with a view to determining the point of view of which system will best qualify us to avert war if possible or, if that should fail, to win it. And we must not disregard the effect of our decision upon both our friends and our potential enemies. Even if, on a balance of all other considerations, we should come to the conclusion that we could in a war put in as great an effective effort if we had previously relied only upon voluntary service, we should still have to consider whether the adoption of compulsion might not so encourage our allies, and impress our possible foes, as to increase our chance of averting war.

The question must turn mainly, however, upon whether compulsion would in fact increase the efficiency of our efforts, and we must look closely on the arguments on each side.

In the first place, those who are opposed to the change say truly that a man who has volunteered for a particular form of service is certainly more likely to be keen and eager, and on the whole more likely to be more suitable for it, than one who is brought in under compulsion and is,

perhaps, chosen on paper qualifications and with little discrimination. They add too, with truth, that these considerations are of much greater force in a country whose traditions are opposed to conscription than where conscription has long been customary.

This argument is reinforced by the fact that the Government's actual plans for their different services do not at present appear to require more men in peace than they can reasonably hope to secure as volunteers. It is the Government's preparation, not the public readiness to serve, that lags behind. Nothing could be worse than that a large number of men, many of whom would have volunteered, should be compulsorily allotted to services that do not correspond with their personalities or aptitudes, and that it should then appear that the Government do not know what to do with them in these services. Up to a point, which does not seem yet to have been reached, it takes much longer to plan the allocation of personnel than to obtain it. What is needed therefore, it is argued, is something like a Man-Power Requirements Department, which, in conjunction with those responsible for our main strategy, should work out in detail the whole of our requirements for personnel both in peace and in war, decide from what classes the personnel for the different services should be drawn, and create the machinery for allotting this personnel as soon as the needs are fully known. In the meantime, it is said, let volunteers be invited for the services already needing men and ready to use them, and let the voluntary system stay so long as it suffices. Why compel men so long as they can be obtained without compulsion?

In addition there is the great political difficulty. It cannot be expected that the Labour Party and the Trade Unions will willingly accept compulsory service under a Government they distrust, and in aid of a policy with which they may not be in agreement. But if compulsion were forced through without their consent by a majority vote the result might be very serious. The country might

be hopelessly divided. There might be strikes or reduced work throughout the essential industries. All the disadvantages of compelled over willing work would be immensely increased.

All these are serious objections. But there are important considerations on the other side.

In the first place, voluntary service, with no more specific guidance than has so far been given, is likely to result in much misdirection of effort. As the numbers required in peace, and the period of training becomes more exacting, the disproportionate demands upon the more patriotic individuals and the more public-spirited employers (who have to live in competition with others) may involve such injustices as to be intolerable. Volunteers may prove insufficient ; or at the best there may be considerable ill-feeling between those who undertake the more arduous forms of service and those who do not. The Government's requirements will rapidly increase. A compulsory scheme would perhaps spur it to proceeding more rapidly with its difficult work of planning the use of the personnel. The objection to enrolling, and then disillusioning unwanted men, could be met by a skilful scheme and adequate publicity.

The political difficulty remains and it cannot be evaded. But it could be met by a reconstruction of the Government.

Lastly there is the consideration already mentioned, that so dramatic a step by the country which has always relied on a voluntary system would stiffen the morale of France and impress Germany, and all who may be either our friends or foes, as no other step could do. Europe may still remain doubtful as to our determination, and the seriousness of our intentions, so long as we shrink from what is to all continental countries so integral a part of defensive measures.

If, with these counter-arguments before us, we are to reach a just conclusion, we must first keep steadily before



us the object to be attained. Compulsory service is not an end in itself, it is a method which is good or not as it may help or hinder our essential purpose. That purpose is to secure that we utilise the man-power of the country, as and how it is most required, for the needs of our present dangerous situation. In pursuit of this end several things come logically ahead of the question of the way in which men should be recruited for different forms of service. In the first place, the policy for which our forces are to be used must be one upon which the country will be united. Secondly, the Government entrusted with the powers to use these forces in support of its diplomacy must be one which is trusted by the nation. Thirdly, if we assume that both these conditions are satisfied, we arrive at the real crux of administrative action, which is too apt to be ignored or to be subordinated to the discussion of the "voluntary" or "compulsory" principle. The resources of the country must be planned, and a system of directive control prepared which will secure their best utilisation. The plan must distinguish between those industrial resources which are to be devoted to war preparations and supplies, those which are to be left to carry on under normal conditions, for ordinary peace needs, and those which can and should be severely compressed in order to provide resources for important distinctions. These categories are of course not absolute in the sense that the industries in the first class would do nothing but war work, or those in the second be left unaffected ; but the distinction is needed as a guide to the further action needed. Then the necessary steps (including the creation of a Ministry of Supply and the other measures here discussed) must be taken to secure the utmost possible output from the first class of industries. All this would constitute one main part of the plan ; the other, its essential counterpart, must deal with the number of men in the combatant forces ; their provenance from different classes of present activity ; and, in some respects most important of all, the

kind of training they need and the period required for that purpose. The numbers allotted for this class of service would be determined partly by the prospective needs of the strategic situation and partly by a calculation of the numbers available, after allowance for what will be required to maintain essential supplies both for the combatant services and for civil needs in time of war and war preparation respectively. This is of course a calculation which must take into account every possible economy which can be made through industrial reorganisation and the absorption of those now not employed or engaged in work that can be dispensed with.

This is the essential task, which needs to be done whether we have compulsion or not. The rôle of compulsion is to serve as a help to such arrangements if help is needed.

Let me illustrate this point, which is, in my view, the crux of the whole question, by considering it in relation to the situation at the beginning of this year. Not only was the foreign policy of the Government bitterly disliked by about half the country. Not only was the personnel of the Government, partly because of its policy, but also because of its administrative incompetence, also distrusted by a similar proportion. More than that, the defensive preparations devised by the Government did not obviously require more than could be obtained under the voluntary system. They wanted about a million people for air raid defence work. The training required was compatible with the continuance of ordinary occupations. The real difficulty in obtaining the numbers was due entirely to failure to explain the need and above all to make such arrangements for training, and for defence work generally, as would inspire confidence. The Government was able to obtain all the men it needed for the Navy and the Air Force. The shortage for the Army (though excessively and undesirably publicised) was of minute proportions and obviously due to the inferior attractions of the Army as a career in

comparison with the other services. No large Regular Army or any extensive and prolonged training for the Territorials was then planned or apparently desired. Why, it was asked, in all these circumstances, should the public willingly accord compulsory powers to a Government which so many people distrusted, and which showed no sign of making adequate use of its present resources, still less of the new ones proposed? Compulsory enrolment and the paper allocation of vast numbers of men to different services would not in itself create the organisation for mobilising industries and training for the new service that was needed. It might indeed almost as probably encourage the Government to prolonged inertia, under the comforting illusion that the essential step had been taken, as spur them to the further action needed to use the new resources. A large part of the public would have felt, and not unreasonably, that they were being caught in the trap of the conscriptionists who have always wanted compulsion for its own sake or as a permanent and desirable part of our system, not only or primarily because the special needs of the moment demanded it. In these circumstances a compulsory scheme pushed through by a disciplined majority might at that time have done more harm than good. Its one immediate advantage, of impressing our friends and foes, might perhaps have been offset by protests, not only in the national Parliament but in the factories, and the real problem of organisation would not have been solved—it might even have been made more difficult.

But, since the beginning of the year, the situation has been fundamentally changed. The strategic need for a substantial British army available for service on the Continent has greatly increased. The disunity on the basic principles of foreign policy has largely been ended, with the assistance of the recent action of the dictators, and we are well in sight of reaching essential unity in foreign policy. Lastly, the Government have announced

an increase of the Territorials from 130,000 to 340,000, without however making any arrangements for giving them adequate training or indeed (as far as can be seen) adequate equipment. That they have gone so far, and have not gone further, is the basis on which we shall now again have to consider the question of "universal citizen service". For we must now assume that at least this number of soldiers will be needed — and that they must be qualified to meet forces which are trained under the continental system. The present spare-time training of the Territorials will not suffice, and no amount of enthusiasm will compensate for the absence of the more prolonged periods of exercise and instruction which are available under such a system as Switzerland, for example, has long adopted. The difficulties of imposing the extra obligation now required — both as to numbers and as to period of absence from normal work — upon our present system are very great. It is likely, therefore, that we shall need a form of compulsion to render the forces we are now providing efficient and capable of expansion. Compulsion is the complement, and only justified as the complement, of Government arrangements for our defence which necessitate men in such numbers, under such conditions and with such qualifications that the voluntary system would be subject to an impossible strain or involve intolerable injustice.

This, I suggest, is the perspective in which the question should be viewed; and, personally, I should arrive at the following conclusions which have been already suggested but may conveniently now be summarised.

Compulsory powers will be justified, desirable, and should be given by Parliament, under the following conditions, which I put in a logical rather than a chronological order, for some of them would clearly be simultaneous or would overlap.

First, we must have essential unity in our foreign policy. Secondly, the Government to which the com-

pulsory powers are entrusted must be one which is truly national in the sense that it is representative of all the main parties and sections ; or alternatively, the Government must be strongly reinforced in its personnel, co-operation between Government and Opposition must be greatly increased, and the Opposition's consent to the granting of the compulsory powers must be assured. Thirdly, the vital work of planning and re-organising the resources of the country, and deciding what men and women are needed for the various services in peace and war respectively, should be proceeded with urgently and regarded as the necessary preliminary of the enrolment and classification of persons on any but a provisional basis. Fourthly, the compulsory powers, while thus in the hands of a reconstructed Government and ready for use, should only be actually used ~~if~~ and so far as the needs of national service are proving to be in excess of the suitably qualified volunteers for those services. Fifthly, a general system comprising directive control by the State of industries from which service of national importance is required should be at once worked out ; and it should be brought into full operation either before, or simultaneously with, the actual application of compulsion for individual service. The granting of legislative powers by Parliament should be simultaneous for both forms of compulsion.

A compulsory Register is a piece of mechanism which should be considered in relation to similar considerations and to the policy just outlined.

The course of action just suggested would combine the advantages of an immediate demonstration of the willingness of the British people to accept compulsory service ; of securing a national unity expressed and insured by an appropriate Government ; of utilising the full benefits of voluntary service so far as it suffices ; of supplementing it where, and only where, it is necessary ; and, as a further consequence of all these advantages, of removing the

public repugnance to compulsory methods and preventing it from impairing the good-will and efficiency with which service is rendered.

(b) *The Service of Industry*.—The contrast between the terms on which personal service and those on which the services of industry are asked is glaring; and unless the disparity is reduced, willingness either to volunteer in sufficient numbers or to accept a system of compulsion cannot be expected. In the first case a man gives his leisure in peace, and in war accepts a greater risk, on terms which often mean financial loss as well. In the latter, payments are made which result in profits to investors and speculators in the war industries which may be much greater than they would have gained except for the nation's danger.

While it has somewhat extended the work of its own arsenals, the Government is obtaining the great bulk of its armaments supplies from private industry, which works under the ordinary purchase-and-profit system except that an attempt has been made to keep the prices within a reasonable ratio to costs by elaborate costing methods. These methods have received a general approval from a Parliamentary Committee, though they have been severely condemned by individual critics with expert knowledge. But whether or not the present costing system is as good a one as can be devised, the proof that it is inadequate to remove the injustice in question is decisive. We have only to look at the Stock Exchange quotation of shares in armaments industries, or to compare the profits earned by the new factories with the actual money spent in their capital construction and installation. The result is, to any unbiased person, intolerable.

The scale of Government expenditure has indeed now reached such dimensions as to present us already with the problem which proved so serious in the last war. As the demands of the combatant services then increased, an elaborate system was built up in which the costing method

was combined with Government control of the industries and of their raw materials. Only, however, where the whole industry was taken over in the sense that it operated as an agent for the Government — the shareholders receiving a fixed return, and any balance of profit or loss falling to the Exchequer — were undue gains at the expense of the State and the public prevented. This was done, from the first day of the war, with the railways. In other industries the problem is, of course, more difficult. It is not enough to determine a ratio between cost and price for Government purchases which would be reasonable under normal peace conditions, for the economies resulting from immense uniform orders and the consequent avoidance of all costs and waste involved in finding a market will yield extravagant profits. And this is not the main trouble. It is impossible to draw a clear line between industries supplying the Government and other industries which are supplying materials or partly manufactured goods to them. Nor is this all. The demands made by the Government may affect the ratio of supply and demand outside the range of Government orders altogether. The extravagant fortunes made by ship-owners in the last war, for example, were not the result of excessive payments by the Government for the ships it requisitioned. They came from the high freight rates obtained in the open market by free ships for private cargoes, these rates being caused partly by the withdrawal from the market of the requisitioned ships and partly by the destruction of ships by submarines. During the last stages of the war all British ships were formally requisitioned and received fixed rates of pay, and the large profits obtainable by those which were not required for Government service were brought into the Exchequer. This was a satisfactory solution, but it was the complement of a very complete control by the Government of all imported supplies, which was only built up gradually over several years. It was only introduced after hundreds of millions

of pounds of additional profit resulting from war conditions had already gone into private pockets; and though income tax and excess profits tax did something to reduce the injustice, the residue was still immense.

It is, of course, difficult to introduce such a method as that just described except as part of an extensive system of war control. The first version of the National Defence Contribution introduced by Mr. Chamberlain in 1937 was based on a recognition that Government orders were likely to extend gains over a large range of industries beyond those directly supplying the Government. It would have been a useful supplement to the costing system if it had not included technical defects which led to its abandonment. As it is the problem is still substantially untouched.

What is the line of solution? The problem presents certain technical difficulties which it is impossible to deal with here. I must content myself with a few general observations.

The costing system, even if perfected, is not enough, for the reasons already indicated. The increase of ordinary taxation is not enough, for a rate of taxation that is intolerably high for a professional man or salaried official whose income has not been increased by armaments orders is obviously quite inadequate for a shareholder whose income may have been multiplied several times as a direct consequence of those orders. The only real solution lies in making a wide range of industries temporarily the agents of the Government, working upon Government account, with all the effects which that involves upon the normal working of the economic system. And "financial" socialisation of this kind is inseparable from the problem of directive control as well. Directive control is moreover indicated for many industries for other reasons also. If the Government require powers to compel a man to give personal service in a combatant service, why should they not equally have power to



compel an industry to make what is most needed and to forgo what is less important? Of course, many industries must in any case be left free to earn money by trade at home and abroad, or our finances will be exhausted; but should not the decision rest with a public authority which can, in each case, weigh the one consideration against the other?

Can we, then, dispense with private profits, as distinct from earnings on public account, to this extent? In the normal economic system profits serve two purposes. They are an incentive to effort and enterprise; and they act as a regulator between supply and a varying demand of a dispersed public with changing tastes. In time of war, or in a period of acute crisis and abnormal war preparations, another incentive is available; and the function of profits as a regulator of supply and demand is not required in the same degree. Indeed, profits serve this latter purpose very ill at a time of very large Government orders at limited prices, for they attract enterprise to making commodities where prices are uncontrolled; they thus result in the exploitation of the public and in the loss of many of the great economies which should be given by centralisation of ordering.

I have already discussed the relative advantages of a system of State control and the ordinary system of private enterprise and profits. We need not now consider their respective merits for peace conditions. It is incontestable that the former system is essential in war, as it was found to be in the last war. What of a period like the present? I will only remark that, in my view, this period should be regarded, from the point of view of our problems of economic organisation, as more similar to 1917 than to 1913. We should, in my view, be prepared in every way to introduce, from the first day of a war, a system of control as complete as that which we had evolved in the latter stage of the last war; and we should also, I believe, introduce a great part of this system at once for all the industries

most directly concerned with the armaments programme.

There is indeed no more urgent administrative problem than that of working out the best system of both directive and financial control, for war industries and other essential industries, for periods of war preparation and of war respectively. The Treasury may be too occupied in daily tasks to give adequate time to so intricate a problem. But could they not invite the assistance of some of those outside the service? Such an organisation as P.E.P., for example, would be admirably qualified to do the preparatory work required.

### *Democracy and Discipline*

In this national effort there is one danger of which we need to be aware. It is being increasingly suggested that our parliamentary system is largely responsible for the inadequacy of our preparations. It cannot be too definitely stated that the fault has been that of personal incompetence and weakness of the Ministers in office. Parliament has accorded all the powers and all the money asked for. It can and does act, on all essential matters, as quickly as any Government wishes. More than that. This record has shown that Parliament has for years been in advance of the Government. For some years most of what was done to remedy the defects and the inadequacy of the early defensive plans was done as a result of parliamentary pressure and would not have been done, or at least done as soon, without that pressure. This is true of the reform of the Air Ministry, of the provision of interceptors and aircraft, of the measures for evacuation, for providing shelters, for buying food reserves, to mention only some of the many vital questions. If Ministers had done what they wanted, and no more than they wanted, they would have done less and not more; and what they did would have corresponded even less than our present preparations to the real dangers that confront us. It may perhaps be

said that the parliamentary and electoral system, owing to the disturbing effect of the sham coalition that followed the financial crisis of 1931, has been responsible for these Ministers. In particular the Opposition has been so weak in numbers that it has not fulfilled even the first function of an Opposition, that of making the Government choose its best men rather than its most loyal and uncritical supporters for offices. This is true. But in any case it is want of personal competence and energy that is at fault, not parliamentary obstruction. And no system can be a substitute for incompetence in the responsible Ministers. It can somewhat mitigate the effects of their incompetence, and has done so, but that is all. If those at the head of the dictatorship régimes had been weak, slack, and incompetent, the absence of a critical Parliament would have been a handicap to them. Wrong decisions would have been transmitted more quickly and more completely throughout their whole system and would have been incurable. Public criticism is a painful but a curative process, and it gives a great advantage, in the long run, over those who are exempt from it.

If therefore the Government use the fact that dictators enforce secrecy as a pretext for withholding information about our defences, which is not really a secret at all, except for the public ; and if a stricter discipline is imposed upon Civil Servants in their contacts with Members of Parliament with a view to depriving parliamentary criticism of its reality and effectiveness, the result will most certainly be worse and not better. There are disadvantages in certain forms of debate in foreign policy, as is fully recognised elsewhere in this book, but for that there is the easily practicable remedy there proposed. In general, parliamentary criticism is useful and indeed indispensable. If we stifle it, we shall not thereby acquire the advantages of the dictatorship system, but we shall lose the virtues of our own.

If we turn from Parliament to the working of a free

system throughout the life of the country, the case is not quite so simple. It is true that the centralised control of the whole economic activities of a people, and the enforcement of a strict discipline under terror, does give an advantage to the dictators in quickly mobilising the full potential strength of their countries for war preparations. They are probably creating a degree of discontent, and undermining the willing co-operation of their people to an extent which would make it unlikely that they could count upon a continued endurance and determination in a long conflict equal to that which a free and informed nation would give. They are probably destroying the latent sources of strength which are provided by the inventive, creative and enterprising qualities that only a free environment can foster. But, in the short run, for the rapid mobilisation of such strength as the country possesses, for the bluffing diplomacy that precedes a conflict, and probably for the early stages of a conflict, the dictators indubitably possess great advantages.

But what follows? We must certainly imitate the dictators in some respects. We must be ready for more discipline, for a much greater sacrifice of comfort and of the right to be idle or to occupy ourselves in work that cannot now be afforded. We need more centralised direction, a more coherent planning of all our effort. But how can we obtain this? Not certainly by an imposition of authority unwillingly accepted under penalty and terror. That will never be possible here except under alien domination or in the chaos that follows a destructive war. Our discipline, our nation-wide organisation, our sacrifice of luxury and leisure, must be accepted by a people informed and conscious of the real character of our danger. The policy of doping and duping must be succeeded by one of leading, informing and trusting the public. Free peoples have great sources of strength that are peculiar to themselves. They have hitherto utilised resources of courage, public spirit and

gifts of rapid improvisation under local, voluntary and democratic leadership. They can co-operate actively in any scheme they see to be rational and necessary. They can endure for an end they value and understand. They have latent sources of strength and growth that no terrorised, uninformed, uncritical people, whose creative, inventive qualities, whose initiative and whose enterprise has been crushed, can possess. We must use, and not destroy, the distinctive virtues of our own system ; and we must use them partly to secure a willing acceptance of such measures of discipline and control as are needed to give not only strength in the long run but strength for immediate action. An attempt to impose the methods of the dictatorships, except to this extent and in this way, would most certainly fail — and incidentally would destroy one of the principal reasons we have for defending our own institutions against theirs. It is, however, not enough for the nation to be willing to respond ; we need a Government that can lead ; and a Government that can be trusted to make good use of the powers placed in its hands.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PRIME MINISTER

MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN is one of the five men whose personalities have in recent years done most to determine the course of world events. The course which we pursued after he became Prime Minister was an expression of his mind and found its principal support in his will. His Ministers were the instruments of his policy, and his advisers only on the details of its application. He acquired, or assumed, a dominance over his Cabinet which had scarcely been approached in the interval between Gladstone and Mr. Lloyd George. The ultimate decisions on issues of the first importance were personal, not collective. Mr. Chamberlain for two years professed, and pursued, a policy of "appeasement". But was it indeed in any full sense a policy, or was it little more than a phrase and a euphemism for opportunist surrender? Had he himself thought out the principles upon which he would discriminate between what was to be conceded and what would be resisted? Had he given instructions for a plan, or alternative plans, to be worked out in conformity with such principles? Had he decided how to secure the best results from his policy by making it clear in main outline alike to possible friends and possible foes, in advance of demands under menace? And if so, would the content have been likely to attract the sympathy of the one and make less probable the forcible action of the other?

We shall not know the answers to these questions, for on the Ides of March his policy was killed, and the events of the following weeks were like the daggers of Caesar's assassins hacking a corpse from which the life had already

departed. Mr. Chamberlain, disillusioned and indignant, turned to a new policy, that of gathering a combined resistance to aggression, based upon reciprocal commitments.

The questions we now have to ask are different ones. Will the basis of any new alliances be only that of the common and imminent danger, or will he enlarge them into a constructive peace policy? Will he attempt, by the nature of his aims, to attract the aid of countries not immediately threatened and to diminish the will to aggression of the peoples of the Axis countries? Will he seek every opportunity to enlarge a policy of mutual aid in emergency into one of collective security which might not only snatch peace for the moment but preserve it? Will a man of his age, who has just seen the hopes of his later years suddenly destroyed, be able in a moment to bring the requisite strength and constructive vision to a different policy? Will he be able at once to infuse the necessary energy into our defensive preparations?

We could not expect to find answers to such questions in any pronouncements he has been able to make in the stress of these days of crisis. We can only help ourselves to guess more probably by considering his past record and his personality.

What then is the man who, at this crisis of our national fate, holds such a position? What is his record, and what are the qualities he displays in the daily conduct of business and debate?

Like his father before him, Mr. Chamberlain has his roots in Birmingham and the Midlands. He has suffered less from transplanting than most other Prime Ministers who have been born and bred outside the London area, and he has succumbed less to the powerful and sometimes enervating influences of the metropolitan environment. Those who seek eagerly the intimates of a new Prime Minister found two years ago that their search was more than usually difficult, and took them further afield. He

came, again like his father, and unlike his half-brother, comparatively late to Westminster and Whitehall, fortified by a long record of municipal service, which has been kept alive by a continuous and lively interest in the affairs of his city and the region of which it is the centre. Mr. Attlee said of him some time since that he was like a listening set that tuned-in to Midland Regional, but not to National. But there is some benefit, if also some loss, in the fact that Midland comes through with special strength. The trouble is not really with National ; it is with more distant stations that communication is often difficult. Geneva has been out of range for some time. Atmospherics have sometimes interrupted the connection with Washington. Moscow has rarely evoked more than crackles.

His first entry into Whitehall, as Minister for National Service in Mr. Lloyd George's administration, was not fortunate. He made the mistake of issuing an appeal for volunteers before he had thought out, and worked out, a plan for utilising them. He parted from Mr. Lloyd George with rankling memories upon both sides which have remained and have been rekindled by many later events. It was a bad omen, but a misleading one, for his future. For he was later one of the most successful Departmental Ministers of his time. The Ministry of Health probably regards him as the best Minister assigned to it since its creation ; the Treasury as perhaps the most competent Chancellor for the current business of the Department, and within the limits of orthodox policy, since Gladstone. He has all the qualities that Whitehall most desires for its normal tasks : industry, order, precision, correctitude, decision. He is neither wayward, nor fickle, nor fanciful. He is a lucid expositor, a competent defender, of departmental policy.

His appearance, his manner and his work express with equal clarity the personality behind them, within the limits set by a jealously guarded reserve.



Spare, even ascetic, in figure, dark-haired and dark-eyed ; with a profile rather corvine than aquiline ; he carries his seventy years well and looks and seems less than his age. His voice has a quality of harshness, with an occasional rasp, and is without music or seductive charm, but it is clear and resonant and a serviceable instrument of his purpose. In debate and exposition his speech is lucid, competent, cogent, never rising to oratory, unadorned with fancy, and rarely touched by perceptible emotion. But it gives a sense of mastery of what it attempts, well reflects the orderly mind behind and, if something is lost, it derives strength from its disregard of all that is not directly relevant to the close-knit argument of his theme.

In manner he is glacial rather than genial. He has neither the spontaneous ease of intercourse of some of his colleagues, nor the *fausse bonhomie* of others. It is unfortunate, and of some importance, that his expression often tends to something like a sneer, and his manner to something like a snub, even when there is nothing in either his intentions or his feelings to correspond. Not infrequently, even when in the substance of his reply he is giving, not denying, satisfaction, a nervous interrogator may have to read his Hansard next morning to realise that he has been successful. His instinctive attitude to a critic, even one who intends to be helpful and constructive, is to resist and bear down, not to conciliate or to compromise. An opponent must be opposed ; and a supporter who shows signs of independence must be disciplined. To a somewhat exceptional extent he regards unquestioning loyalty, obedience, pliability, as giving better claims to his favours than signs of personal initiative or judgement. And the young man who has the qualities which might later make him a strong member of a Cabinet has little chance of getting his feet on the path that leads to it. He seems acutely conscious that the trim of a boat of light

and he prefers the even running of his craft to the vigour of the individual oar. His choice of colleagues, till after the September crisis, seemed usually to turn upon a high sense of the team spirit rather than a desire to match personal qualifications with the functions of a particular office. Mr. Ormsby-Gore's appointment to the Colonial Office was indeed an exception, but when a father's death took him from the Commons no strong objection was made to his simultaneous departure from the Government. The appointment of Mr. Duff Cooper to the War Office and the Admiralty, or of Lord Stanhope to the Board of Education, to take two examples only of many, were presumably determined by other considerations than those of the special needs of these offices ; and while one left the Government, and the other changed his Department, the reasons for their departure do not correct this impression. It may be that Mr. Chamberlain considers that the Departments will get along very well under their permanent chiefs, with an occasional impulse from the Head of the Government ; and that a Minister should be primarily, not a departmental head, but an acceptable and not too troublesome member of the Cabinet whose policy the Prime Minister should direct. Or he may be an indifferent judge of men. In junior appointments he appears to consult the Chief Whip, who applies a criterion appropriate to his office.

Such a catalogue gives little clue to the more human and intimate side of his character, which indeed for most of us is guarded by an impenetrable reserve. Parliamentary life reveals personality better than most forms of human association, but there are substances which even the most powerful of rays cannot penetrate ; and in the region which lies beyond the qualities which Mr. Chamberlain exhibits in current business the observer must be content with guess-work. There can be no doubt of the strength and depth of his desire to save his compatriots and humanity from the sufferings of a general conflict. But

the-individual distresses of those who fall by the wayside, in Czechoslovakia, or China, or Spain, do not often visibly touch his emotions. And what he does not feel he never professes to feel. It is indeed always more certain that he genuinely feels an emotion which he expresses, than that he feels none when he is silent.

### *Two Prime Ministers*

Mr. Baldwin washed away the dust of the arena not only by communion with Nature but by drawing on the well-spring of English literature and a form of philosophy congenial to his rich and humane temperament. These pursuits of his leisure had some affinity with the work of his office. The perspective of a wide range of vision, extending to distant and dim horizons, set the current problems of the day in a truer proportion; but they also destroyed something of their definition and clarity of outline.

Mr. Chamberlain draws strength from Nature, as Grey did, through fishing. He turns also in his leisure to classical music, which has not the same affinity with his practical duties as Mr. Baldwin's literature and philosophy. The two sides of his nature and his interests are more sharply divided. His vision is at once narrower in range and clearer.

There could indeed scarcely be a greater contrast in temperament and outlook than between the two statesmen who have successively occupied the same office both in the State and in the Conservative Party. Mr. Baldwin's qualities are in some aspects more attractive. On balance, however, those of Mr. Chamberlain are perhaps more appropriate to the office of Prime Minister when that office demands decision, a steady purpose, a strong will and industrious application. If Mr. Baldwin had remained as head of the Government it is likely that events in 1938 would have developed much as they did till September.

But, for good or ill, it is unlikely that the British Prime Minister would have gone to Berchtesgaden, Godesberg, Munich. We should have drifted on, perhaps to a diplomatic success, perhaps to war.

*Mr. Chamberlain and Monsieur Poincaré*

If we wish to find the closest analogy, among statesmen of the first rank, we must turn to one of a different nation who pursued a very different, and in foreign affairs even a diametrically opposite, policy. Monsieur Poincaré, too, had a restricted range of habitual vision, and an unequalled clarity of vision within that range; what he saw, he saw precisely in all its detail; what he did not so see was altogether outside his consciousness; he had a complete mastery of all he knew, and a supreme disregard for what he did not. He was glacial and unresponsive. He had a coldly, frictionlessly functioning brain, which was a perfect instrument for his limited, inflexible purposes. The force of a strong nature, the determination of a strong will, the vigour of a robust physique, were all increased by this concentration of effort and interest. Mr. Chamberlain has all these characteristics, though all of them in a less extreme form; he is compact, cold, correct, concentrated, with both the limitations and the strength which these qualities involve. The analogy is confirmed by the similarity of the personal reactions of the Celt of genius to the Lorrainer and to the Midland Englishman.

The strength needs to be emphasised, for it is the essential factor in Mr. Chamberlain's qualification for his office and in any calculations we may make as to the prospects of his policy. There are Ministers, but they are rare, who seem to gather not only knowledge but force from a multiplicity of human contacts and a sympathetic responsiveness to every passing influence. More commonly, however, strength is thus dispersed rather than accumulated; and many statesmen feel instinctively that they must either restrict their personal contacts with

powerful personalities or protect themselves by a not easily penetrable reserve if they are to maintain the integrity of their central purpose. President Wilson did so, and so does Mr. Chamberlain. He loses something, but he also gains. He is emphatically not among those Ministers of whom it is said that if you wish to know their policy of the moment you must enquire who was the last man to see them.

The steady undeviating pursuit of his central purpose in foreign policy, until he was himself convinced that it had become impossible, has indeed been the most striking feature of Mr. Chamberlain's administration. Having made up his own mind what line of policy it was in the national interest to follow in face of the strength and ambitions of the dictatorship régimes, no disappointments, or humiliations, or attacks from the Opposition and the country, or revolt within his own Cabinet deflected him an inch from his path — until the Ides of March. It may not have been the best policy, but it was a policy, it was his policy, and it was consistent and undeviating.

### *Reaction to External Pressure*

The impression so far given of a concentrated, inflexible purpose, of an unresponsiveness to influence, needs both justification and qualification in the light of the general record of the last two years. If Mr. Chamberlain has seemed to stand in a sharper personal opposition than most Prime Ministers to his political critics, it is untrue to say that his policy is in all respects divided from theirs by a more than usually wide gulf or that he never yields to representations. He has a genuine desire to maintain and improve the social services, which derives both from his personal outlook and his hereditary traditions. He has, in some respects, a real liberality of outlook in regard to the affairs of the British Commonwealth, as his policy with regard to both Ireland and India have shown. And

it may well be objected to the account I have given that, in spite of the size of its majority, the Government have in fact yielded in a surprising number of cases to parliamentary pressure. The most striking feature of Mr. Chamberlain's Budget of 1937, the National Defence Contribution, was hastily withdrawn and replaced by a scheme based on quite different principles. And, one by one, a large number of demands first made by critics in Parliament for reforms in our defensive programme, have in fact been made — though others remain without satisfaction.

What is the explanation of this apparent paradox? In part it is that, in this strange period, much of what a Left Opposition, as well as critical supporters, have been demanding has been a more effective armaments policy, and the compelling force of external events has been on their side. But it is not enough to say this. The fact is that Mr. Chamberlain is much less unresponsive to external influence and pressure than his manner and methods suggest. And there are occasions in which he yields not too little but too much. His attitude to the farmers is an illustration of this. He made a remark about the natural limits of British agriculture which, to any objective and disinterested listener, was nothing but a plain statement of an obvious truth. But the listeners were not objective and disinterested. They raised an agitation to which Mr. Chamberlain responded by removing the Minister of Agriculture and replacing him by an ex-President of the Farmers' Union. It is a precedent of sinister omen (I speak only of the principle involved, without the slightest reflection on the personal qualities of the new Minister). It was the kind of concession which denotes weakness, for it was made to an organised interest, not to a collective expression of a disinterested opinion on public policy. A Baldwin would not have been so infelicitously precise in the original statement; a Gladstone would have stood firmer in face of the consequences.

These instances show that, alike for good and ill, Mr. Chamberlain does not possess such an inflexible will as, for example, first brought President Wilson to the summit of human power and then, at the crisis of his fate, shattered both him and the main object of his policy because he could not compromise.

Shall we, then, in the light of such evidence, reject the first impression of Mr. Chamberlain's strength? Shall we decide that while pressure when first applied is always resisted, it is likely to be successful if it is continued? Shall we decide that Mr. Chamberlain is, after all, only a path painted with exceptional skill to look like steel?

We should, I believe, be mistaken in any such conclusion. Where Mr. Chamberlain has yielded it has been on questions which do not affect the central purpose of his policy — a matter of method in armament preparations, a matter of domestic policy outside the sphere of his principal interest. He cares more where he cares most, because he cares less where he cares least. His will is stronger for his central purpose, because he confines it to that purpose. His strength is the strength of concentration.

And this must be the central note of any personal description. We may regret the limitation of vision, the inability to gather strength or support by setting policy on a wide and generous basis, the failure to conciliate and attract those of different outlook and ideas, the inconvenient clarity of his exposition of those features of his policy which most annoy his critics or his potential allies, the undisguised expression of his dislikes and prejudices, the inadequate comprehension of the mental attitude of many whose reactions to his declarations are of great importance. But the personal force remains, the greater for its direct purpose because it is concentrated, not dispersed. He has the defects of his qualities, but he has also the qualities of his defects.

*The House of Commons on September 28th, 1938*

The memory of Mr. Chamberlain which will longest remain in the minds of those who were in the House of Commons on September 28th, 1938, will be of the part he then took in the most dramatic scene that a British Parliament has witnessed since the time of Charles I. In the familiar setting of the dark-panelled oblong chamber, with the Speaker in his raised niche, the wigged clerks before the table, the brass-bound boxes and the mace before them, the House itself was as it is only seen on rare and great occasions. Behind the Treasury Bench and the Government on the Speaker's right, behind the Front Opposition Bench on his left, and below the gangway, every permitted space on the floor and on the steps was crowded ; so too were all the galleries above, with Members who could find no room below, or privileged strangers, Peers, Ambassadors, the Press and some fortunate members of the public. But it was not the numbers but the mood that marked this day from others.

The Commons had adjourned at the end of July till October 31st, unless " to call the House at an earlier date if such a course should appear necessary in the public interest ".

The occasion had come. Throughout the summer the storm had gathered ; Lord Runciman mediating between puppets, while their controller bided his moment ; the Nuremberg menace ; the sudden order ; the flight to Berchtesgaden ; the enforced surrender on harsh but apparently defined terms ; the new ultimatum ; the breakdown of Godesberg ; the return of the Prime Minister to report to his people and prepare them ; the summoning of Parliament for the last Wednesday of September.

We came most of us expecting war, and war at once. As we walked to the House we had seen the feverish digging of trenches in St. James's Park, symbol at once of our danger and our unpreparedness. It was with such



events and forebodings that we listened to, the Prime Minister. It needed no great orator to conjure up a picture of distant carnage, for us to hear the "angel of Death beating his wings". The feeblest imagination could catch the whirl and throb of the winged messengers of ruin who in a few hours, nay, even before the day's session was over, might be raining death from the clouds above us. Had the Mother of Parliaments reached the term of her days? Was she to be stricken in her own home? And was her progeny throughout the land to perish with her? We knew not.

Mr. Chamberlain rose, a spare, thin figure, visibly fatigued but erect. We saw the familiar mien and gestures; the hands passing nervously over the face, now touching each other, now touching the lapels of his coat, or removing and replacing his glasses; the slight slant of the posture, with its slow swaying motion; the rather stiff movements of the left arm, the deictic gestures of the right. The voice was tired and low and a little harsh, but it was clear and slowly gathered strength. The speech, in its delivery, its phrasing, its orderly sequence, was clear and incisive. The speaker grew with his theme.

For those who were also in the Chamber on August 3rd, 1914 (and I was one, though then in a gallery, not on the floor), the comparison with Sir Edward Grey must have been always in the mind. The nobility of face and presence, the carved and aquiline profile, the deep and resonant voice matching the high tragedy of the theme, were here no more. It was a slighter, older man, deriving from industry and not from the land, who now bore the combined burdens of Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. But the resemblances were more striking than the differences. The theme unrolled like the scroll of fate; the argument marched as in Greek tragedy to its apparently foredoomed end. Step by step, in 1938 as in 1914, we heard the long sequence of events, all tending towards war; the succession of attempts to arrest them,

each in turn frustrated. I tried this, and I failed ; I tried that, and I failed ; I can no more ; prepare for the inevitable, steel your hearts, and endure. That was in substance Grey's theme ; and so, for an hour, it was Mr. Chamberlain's. But in 1914 the tragedy reached its expected climax, with the German ultimatum to Belgium and its rejection — and we passed out to four years of war. In 1938, at the very moment when a similar climax seemed imminent, we had not a climax but a peripeteia — the most startling, surely, in the history of Parliament. A message was passed along the Treasury Bench to the Prime Minister. He read it ; the shadow on his face lifted ; he read it out. There was to be a third meeting, at Munich. A few moments later, another message arrived ; Signor Mussolini would also attend. Germany, Italy and Great Britain would discuss once more whether there was an alternative to war. At the supreme moment the tension was suddenly relieved. Peace now for the day seemed certain ; for a period, probable ; for our lifetime, not impossible.

It is difficult to recapture, or convey, the mood of the Commons after passing in an hour through the most intense of human emotions, increased for every individual Member because they were shared by five hundred others round him. The House rose and cheered the Prime Minister, it adjourned with a god-speed for his mission from the Leader of the Opposition. For the moment at least we forgot all but the relief. Later reflection, and the criticisms of those not themselves present, brought some reproach. But no body of men could have resisted an emotional strain of intense anxiety and sudden relief, such as no Parliament had ever before sustained. It was not, however, beyond human capacity to resist. The historian and descendant of Marlborough, the War Minister of the last war — the Cassandra of recent years, who had vainly foretold the truth to unheeding ears — sat silent in his place below the gangway, with hunched figure and lowering

brow, visibly remembering the past and foreboding the future.

But whatever the past or future, the merits or faults of policy, the physical endurance and vigour of the central personality in this scene remain an indelible memory. Members many years his junior, bearing no personal responsibility, felt the emotional strain almost beyond endurance. What must it have been for him who had suffered Berchtesgaden and Godesberg and had Munich before him?

He turned to his new task, and neither his will nor his body failed him then or later. Many qualities may be denied him, but not toughness of fibre.

### *Mr. Chamberlain's "Persona"*

Not less important than Mr. Chamberlain's personality, and in some respects perhaps even more important, is the *persona*, or picture of him in the minds of the people of Europe — and of Germany. To many millions he was, after September, a symbol and an emblem; the embodiment of a distinctive purpose, outlook, way of life. It was one of the unpremeditated, but it may conceivably prove to be one of the most enduring, consequences of those three dramatic visits. In direct results their character was only too clear. An ally of our closest associate, France, was mutilated, and soon to be dismembered. The rôle of the British Prime Minister was to induce her to abandon a defence in which neither France nor we were prepared to assist her. No more dramatic scene of British policy and diplomacy in retreat has ever been witnessed. No British Minister has ever had so painful or humiliating a part to play.

And the visible scene seemed appropriate to his rôle. It was he who had to hurry by aeroplane to each of the three appointed places; and it was on German soil that the representative of the ancient British Kingdom met the

creator of the new Reich. He came without pomp or retinue, in civilian dress and with his umbrella; and patiently endured the demands and the declamations of the Führer, who had the emblems of his military strength about him. The British Minister's power was dependent upon a majority in a freely elected Parliament whom he must persuade, and upon an electorate who would soon at their wish confirm his mandate or withdraw it. He met one who needed not to persuade but could command; who wielded a military force which he had himself created, who had in five years brought his country from impotence to a strength which struck terror throughout the world. "The British Prime Minister came, saw, and was defeated."

And yet the image that remained in the mind of Europe was not simply one of an elderly statesman in humiliation. The picture of a modest, patient, civilian figure became the symbol of a million frustrated aspirations and repressed ideals. Years of dragooning and drilling had not yet destroyed all that was pacific, all that was liberal. They denied its expression—and left a vacuum. And it was in the person of Mr. Chamberlain that these frustrated longings at last found a symbol.

Not all the arts of Herr Goebbels, or the power of the machine which he controls, could then persuade the German people that the Government of which Mr. Chamberlain was the head was aggressive in its purpose, was aiming at the encirclement or dismemberment of Germany. For them, as for Europe, he represented essentially the will to Peace—the Peace which, in spite of remembered humiliations and recent triumphs, they most of them desired more than triumph and aggrandisement. It was a factor in all calculations of German strength which Herr Hitler could not ignore. It might the sooner goad him to reckless action; but it might restrain, moderate, even in time transform the régime under which Germany lives. The umbrella moved to laughter—but not to laughter only.

This image of the civilian working for peace was the projection of the frustrated and repressed aspirations of those who welcomed it more than of Mr. Chamberlain's actual personality. Millions longed for a person or a picture in which they could see their desires embodied. Mr. Chamberlain in his mission responded more nearly than any other actual person to their inner hopes, as to others with a different outlook he was the embodiment of the lax and impotent civilian in face of the disciplined soldier. It may be that by misdescribing Mr. Chamberlain's more recent policy, and skilfully exploiting the "encirclement" complex in the German mind, the Nazi régime may destroy this *persona*. But it may be that in the end they will not succeed. It is not perhaps quite inconceivable that the ultimate verdict of history on those humiliating visits may be, not so much on Mr. Chamberlain himself, but on the symbolic civilian, that he came, that he was seen—and that in the end he won.

If, however, his admirers will rightly emphasise his distinctive qualities for the office of Prime Minister, the more because they were so notably absent in his predecessor in that office, his critics will with equal justice recall the limitations and defects of those qualities.

In the first place they will emphasise his apparent tendency to cherish illusions as to the character of those who confront him. He appears to have continued to trust the sincerity of promises and declarations of intentions in the face of evidence which to others seemed overwhelming.

With Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler alike, in Spain as in Czechoslovakia, he accepted promises, agreed to action on the faith of them, saw them broken flagrantly one after the other—and went on repeating the process. He continued the unilateral "non-intervention", seemed to shut his eyes to the evidence of its breaches, certainly to represent them as less than they were. And disillusion in Spain, his critics urge, did not save him from a similar

trap at Berchtesgaden and at Munich. Can such a man, they say, 'possibly face our dangers with the realism and insight which are essential?

It is not easy to assess the truth of this charge. Two years ago Mr. Chamberlain saw that our relations with Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler were developing in such a way as to make war, and war with both countries, apparently inevitable. He decided to attempt to arrest the fatal sequence of events by direct personal contact. He received promises. He was, in the first instance, bound to accept them at their face value and, in the face of scepticism in Parliament, to express his belief in their sincerity. Little by little events began to justify his critics. To admit that they were right meant revising his policy altogether and giving up all attempts at appeasement. Must he do this because of certain breaches in the agreements that might not be decisive? He had the strongest inducement, and it may be for a time a real justification, for continuing in his course, and for expressing a greater confidence in the sincerity of those with whom he negotiated than perhaps he felt in his heart. But the deceptions increased. At what precise time should he admit that the agreements were merely a screen behind which the dictator powers were pursuing their purposes without essential modification? Should it have been at the time when the position became intolerable to Mr. Eden, or that later date at which it became intolerable to Mr. Duff Cooper? To do so might precipitate war at once, and were we yet strong enough for that risk? If then, his admirers urge, he was right to make his first attempt at appeasement, he was right also to continue it to the last possible moment, to keep alive any chance of a return to the observance of agreements by refraining from any denunciation of the successive breaches. To act thus, they argue, was to act as a prudent and patient statesman, in the face of a balance of strength which forbade him to take risks and compelled him to prefer a later

risk to an immediate one ; and it does not prove that he was himself deceived.

The fact which perhaps tips the evidence in favour of believing that he was genuinely under an illusion as late even as March 9th, 1939, is the appearance on that date of simultaneous statements in the Press of an absurdly optimistic appreciation of the international situation, statements which seem to have been inspired from 10 Downing Street — and not from the Foreign Office. • Six days later poor *Punch*, thus misled, brought out its cartoon, "The Ides of March, Crisis flying out of the Window", which may become even more famous than its Rumanian cartoon in the last war.

For the Ides of March was the day not of the departure of the crisis, but of the disillusionment of Mr. Chamberlain.

It is difficult to forecast the effect of this shattering of a belief so long and tenaciously held. Will Mr. Chamberlain, while setting a lesser value upon promises, nevertheless pursue a policy in which willingness to concede is still combined with a readiness to resist, though henceforth in different proportions ? Or will he, under the influence of his disillusionment, swing right over and concentrate entirely upon forming the strongest possible combination against a war now regarded as inevitable ? And in the latter case, will he prove a suitable leader for such a policy ?

Mr. Chamberlain reached his seventieth birthday during the March crisis. It is an age at which rapid adaptation after the sudden destruction of the hopes and illusions of two years is not easy. Of equal importance, however, is the political effect, external and internal, of his continuance in office or departure. Mr. Chamberlain, as we have said, was in Germany as well as in Europe, till March of this year, the symbol of the pacific civilian ; and in spite of the cry of "encirclement" the German people may not be persuaded that a war into which they are being led, against a country of which he is the Prime

Minister, is a war of defence. Against this must be set the probability that, for the same reasons, some potential allies may still entertain some doubts of the reality of Great Britain's readiness to fight so long as he remains.

A consideration more likely to turn the scales is Mr. Chamberlain's position in his own country. It is imperative that there should be national unity in the trials before us, and his record as well as his personality presents difficulties in the way of union under his leadership. In the general conduct of his policy for two years he not only gave the impression of undue compliance with the dictatorships and an excessive trust in their intentions. He seemed, in his relations alike with General Franco, Signor Mussolini, Herr Hitler and the U.S.S.R., to have a personal preference towards the Right as against the Left, which tended to deflect his policy from the line which national interests would have directed. He lost any faith he may have had in the possibilities of the League of Nations as soon as it had, largely through errors of our own, failed in regard to Abyssinia. And in considering our own interests he has often seemed to regard them narrowly, without seeing how intimately they were involved with those of other countries threatened by the Fascist Powers. There has always been, for example, a note of greater reality when he has referred to British trade in the Far East than to the fate of China. His range of vision has seemed to be both restricted and materialistic and his appeal both here and in other countries has been correspondingly weakened.

Both in the substance of his policy, and even more in his presentation of it, he seems to be concerned, not exclusively indeed, but disproportionately, with the rights and interests, especially the material interests, of this country and the Empire. But there are many in Great Britain who would not give wholehearted support in what might seem to them an essentially imperialist issue, and few indeed in countries not directly threatened whose



sympathy in such a case could be expected. The Prime Minister beyond doubt values free institutions ; he desires no system of dictatorship here. But how in the scales of his own personal values does he weight respectively the fate of a foreign democracy and the sovereignty of an outlying portion of the British Empire ? Can he form, pursue and present a policy which will identify our cause with the world's ? He is handicapped by his record, by his apparent limitation of vision, and by the impression made by his personality. The attitude of America depends largely on the reply to this question. So too does that of India, whose new leading personalities may realise the need to combine against aggression through some form of collective system, but are intensely suspicious of British national and imperial policy. It is a part of the directness of his character that what his heart feels his speech expresses. He neither deceives nor attempts to deceive.

Can, or will, the British Prime Minister so enlarge his policy, alike in his own conception and in its exposition, can he so direct the issue, that at the crisis of our fate the free world will, without hesitation or delay, realise that our crisis is their own ? If so, his own country will be united, and the collective strength which any assailants will see ranged against them may — even now — arrest their purpose or at the worst defeat it. We may hope that the condition may be fulfilled — but it must be a hope and not a certain assurance.

### *Note to Part III*

I HAVE had in this Part of the book to lay special emphasis upon the defects in the Government's utilisation of the country's industrial resources, because that is the aspect of the situation which is directly related to the proposals I wished to urge. In the same way there are elsewhere in the book references to the easy-going temperament of the British people, which makes them slow to realise and prepare against a coming menace, because that again is the aspect of our character of which it is well that we, in Great Britain, should beware. Any foreign observer would, however, certainly be mistaken in his judgements if he did not pay equal attention to the other side of the picture. Our industrial resources were not adapted to war preparations as quickly as they should have been. But their reserve strength is very great and their adaptation is now on the way.

The British people are slow to wrath, but as all their history shows, they have a dogged determination and pertinacity of their own when they are once roused. In recent months the British temper, after a long period of apparent indifference, has risen very sharply, and the whole defensive effort of the country, whether we look to industry, to voluntary organisation or to the spirit of the public, is now gathering an impressive momentum.

There was a widespread belief in Germany and elsewhere in 1914 that both Great Britain and France were decadent. The evidence was formidable. The "flannelled fool at the wicket, the muddled oaf at the goal" aroused the indignant protest of our imperial poet and seemed to indicate to the foreign militarist a fundamental levity in our character. We seemed unable to deal with the problem of either Ireland or the House of Lords, and

even civil war seemed to many foreigners more likely than any effective stand against a continental army. We could not even deal with our suffragettes. The conclusion seemed not doubtful. The phenomenon of British decadence *in 1914* would repay further study in the light first of contemporary, and then of somewhat later, evidence.

By the end of the war the British military, naval and air strength was together greater than that of any other combatant, after having grown with every month throughout the four and a half years. It would have been greater still in 1919 had the war lasted.

• Only after that would the unexhausted and almost inexhaustible resources of America have put her in the first place, and Great Britain would have fallen to the second. But that is not a reflection likely to bring much consolation to any foreign observer who is, on evidence so similar to that of 1914, now again hopefully rather than in sorrow meditating on the decadence of the British people.



PART IV

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A NEW PEACE



## CHAPTER I

### PEACE AIMS AND WAR AIMS

We have now discussed the peril and prospect confronting us ; the decline and transformation of the League of Nations and the obstacles we must overcome in order to re-establish it ; and the national effort urgently required to restore our armed strength and our diplomatic position.

These immediate dangers and urgent tasks absorb our energy and our minds. And danger and effort alike make it difficult to look beyond the duties of the day. To talk of a " general settlement " may seem an unreality and a distraction of effort when the chances of realising it look so remote. To discuss the way to bring the countries from which we fear immediate aggression into a common European or world system may evoke the indignant comment that we are still entertaining the illusions which have brought our peril and would again paralyse our effort to meet it. As we increase our armed preparations, the national temper always associated with either war or competitive armament increases. Men become impatient with those who still make a distinction between the German rulers and the German people who faithfully obey them and would follow them to war. Why, they say, should we distract our effort ? We shall need every incentive we can find. Why not add a hatred of the German people ? What does it matter what the German people, or some of them, think in their hearts if it does not affect their actions ?

Such is the mood of the moment, and it may well grow as our armed strength increases, the more because of the bitter memory of our humiliations. We shall do well, however, to consider where such a mood will take us. Let

us suppose that we mobilise the full resources of our country, in an effort of war preparation equal to that of the last stage of the last war. Let us suppose that other countries united to us by the same danger make a comparable effort. Even then, if the peoples of the dictatorship countries remain as firmly united behind their Governments in the defence of opposing politics and ambitions, the best we can reasonably hope for is that we shall secure an equipoise of armed strength that will for a time give a precarious peace. If that is all, war in the end is inevitable ; and even while it is averted we shall lose the reality of most of what we chiefly value. If we aim at no more than matching force with force, and cannot penetrate the mind of the peoples opposing us, we cannot, upon any sober calculation, expect more than an armed peace of exhaustion followed in the end by a war of destruction.

But let us even imagine that we can go still further ; that we can gather a definitely superior strength and defeat the Axis countries quickly and decisively, and impose our terms. What is the ultimate purpose for which we should be preparing our armaments and fighting our war ? Is it to be our intention, if we win, to impose a real Carthaginian peace — this time without mercy or mitigation ? Are we to say that, after all, Poincaré was right and we were wrong in the early years after the war ? Shall we say that the mistake we made was not that we failed to pursue a sufficiently magnanimous policy to conciliate the German people, but that we did not break them up and prevent them forcibly from ever becoming more than a secondary power ? Shall we therefore determine that, if we can, we will hold down this great people in perpetual subjection ?

To pursue such a policy would surely be not only to reduce our chances of success in war by hardening the will of the German people, but to doom whatever is best in our civilisation to inevitable destruction, whatever the military result. As democracies, as the British people



and Commonwealth, we stand for certain ideals, traditions, way of life. What would remain of them after a war, or even after a long period of competitive war preparations, directed to no better end? If we are to find the fortitude, the strength and the inspiration for the trial before us we must have, and preserve, a purpose worth living and dying for. What should this be?

When the last war ended, those who represented the best in Europe and in the world had an ideal before them. They meant to reconstruct from the ruins a better economic structure and a juster form of society. They meant to heal the wounds of the defeated peoples and bring them as free and equal citizens into a new world system. They meant to preserve and develop what was finest in the traditions of each of their own countries. And as the instrument and embodiment of these purposes they meant to establish a form of world government which would both secure peace by collective defence and ensure justice by equal negotiation and impartial judgement.

It was a great effort for a worthy ideal. It failed — for a time — it just failed; not because it was mistaken, but because it was pursued with a divided purpose and at times by ill-chosen methods.

It is, I would urge, to this ideal, in its main conception, that we must return, while correcting our errors, and improving our methods. And to maintain our purpose we must constantly, in all the distracting anxieties of these times, recall and repeat what we know in our hearts but too easily forget. We must steel our minds against those generalisations, bred so easily of hatred and fear, about the peoples to whom we may be opposed in war. Let us recall, as a warning now again necessary, with what shame we remembered, when the last war was over, the attempts which were made while it lasted to argue that Beethoven and Bach were not great musicians, nor Kant a great philosopher, nor Goethe a great figure in literature.

The German people are among the greatest who have

been made by Western civilisation. They have certain national characteristics which are different from our own, some of which are to their advantage and some of which are not. They have, it is true, a form of sentiment which is alien to our taste, and is consistent with a brutality which is alien to our traditions. They have a tendency to mass mentality and the willing acceptance of an imposed uniformity of outlook and action, discouraging to the initiative, individualism and sense of personal freedom which we value so highly. They have for a century been nursed upon a philosophy which encourages them to welcome an absolutist State.

They are also, however, the people who, even if we value less highly than they do their painstaking research and schematic philosophy, have produced the greatest music and some of the greatest literature of all time. They are the people who nearly established a great liberal State a century ago, and would probably have established such a State a decade and a half ago had Allied policy been more magnanimous and more helpful. They are now under the control of a régime which acquired power because it promised, and has given, what we could have enabled Germany to obtain peacefully under the Weimar Republic; and they are held down by all the means of repression and persuasion which such a régime commands, as we too might be were such a régime ever allowed to seize the instruments of power in this country. The characteristics of the German people which they share with us as members of the human race and inheritors of the Western tradition are as important as those in which they differ from us. The main differences in their present outlook and psychology are in large measure due to the difference in their national experience, especially in the last two decades, for which we must share the responsibility.

Whatever, therefore, we may think of the Nazi régime — and little will be said of it here, for events have told us

all that is necessary — let us still be careful of identifying the German people with all that we most dislike in it. We must aim, not merely at matching force with force, but at reaching the mind of the German people, and for this we need a peace policy boldly conceived and clearly stated. It must embody what we stand for in peace and, if need be, what we should fight for in war, — and what we should resolutely determine to embody in any peace settlement so far as it is in our power to determine its terms. Our peace aims should be identical with our war aims, and with the principles of any peace treaty for which we may be responsible. We do not want once more to lose a peace even if we win a war.

Such a peace policy, if it is widely conceived, comprehensive in its scope, and clearly and constantly announced, will give us national unity and an inspiration for our own effort. It will enlist the sympathy and aid of the world less immediately concerned, as no narrower appeal could do. It *may* reach and influence the mind of the people of Germany.

For any of these purposes, and especially the last, a mere willingness to make concessions when demanded is useless, indeed worse than useless. To yield *seriatim* under menace seems both to ourselves and to others a mere reflection of weakness and cowardice. It discourages our own efforts, repels our possible friends, earns contempt and not gratitude from our foes. It will infallibly whet the appetites of those who may covet what we have, and not sate them. It enforces the moral that the only method to achieve results is to use or threaten force. It is, in its nature, limitless, or only limited at a point where purely national interests are directly involved, and those of the most material kind. And when that point is reached, we shall be disunited at home, stripped of friends, and impotent in the face of a demand for the ultimate surrender.

This is what has been wrong with the so-called policy of appeasement of the last two years. It seemed, so far

as could be inferred alike from silence and from action, a mere euphemism for surrender under menace, without any declared basis in principles of general appeal. It would be disastrous if, through disillusionment and indignation, we swing from such a false and hopeless policy to the desperate alternative of preparing only armed resistance with no practicable goal or constructive purpose at the end.

But if, instead, we attempt to form and pursue a policy of constructive peace, which combines strength to resist with a discriminating willingness to concede, have we any chance of reaching and moving the mind of the German people?

Is there a real distinction between the *hard core* of Germany's ambition, for which the German people would willingly fight rather than yield, and their more extensive wishes which they would prefer to restrict rather than enter upon the hazards of a long and doubtful conflict? If there is such a hard core, are the concessions it requires too great even if war is the alternative? Will the prospect of such resistance as we can offer be sufficient to prevent it from expanding further?

The answers to these questions turn, in part, on the psychology of the German people, in part upon their relations with the present régime. The régime is founded on violence, pursuing a violent policy, and perhaps dependent for its survival on the attainment of every political success by violence or threat of violence. It has a formidable instrument at its service for the suppression and falsification of news and for the repression of any internal movements of protest. The British Government in its formal relations, of course, deals with this régime and not directly with the German people. Its means of access to German opinion, or to sections of the German people capable of influencing the régime, are much less than the opportunities which the Nazi leaders have had of exploiting differences in our country under our free and

democratic system. Concessions, in these circumstances, may have a dual effect. They may do something to satisfy the more moderate sections of the German people, but at the same time they give success to, and so strengthen, the existing régime, and tend to confirm the claim that threats of violence are the best methods of diplomacy. The result may be that even those who most dislike the worst features of the Nazi Party's policy may gradually be converted to their methods, and even those who were most moderate in their ambitions may be incited by easy and bloodless victories.

- There is only one way in which we can hope to avoid this latter danger. It is that any concessions we are willing to offer should not be made in response to specific demands under menace, but embodied in a plan of a general settlement, broadly conceived and clearly announced. In spite of all the means for suppressing and distorting news, the general character of such a plan could be brought to the knowledge of the German people by means of the radio and every other form of publication at our disposal.

Is it possible to find the basis of such a "general settlement" which, even if impracticable at the moment, could be published as a goal to which we, and perhaps the German people, could look forward if the immediate danger of war is averted? We will discuss this question in the following chapters. In the meantime let us not only reflect that the future has little hope for us unless the will of the German people to aggression can be modified. Let us also remember that there is some ground for believing that a magnanimously conceived policy would find a response in the German people of which their rulers would have to take account. There have been signs that the German people are becoming increasingly sceptical of Nazi propaganda; that they understand at least the main facts of the world situation; and that they know the attitude of other countries to such aspects of the Nazi

policy as the latest measures against the Jews. And the vast bulk of the German people ardently desire to avoid war. The expression of this was a notable fact at the time of Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Munich. The significance of his reception there may have been in some respects exaggerated ; it may be that the welcoming crowds were mostly elderly and not representative of the younger generation. But when all due discount has been made, much remains, and its meaning was confirmed by further evidence in later months, until a new factor, which we will discuss later, entered in with the new British policy that followed the Ides of March. Let us, then, recall that scene, for us now the only consoling memory of the historic pilgrimage.

On September 28th, 1938, the peoples of all Europe, of Germany as much as of Great Britain, for the first time expected war, not in an uncertain future but at a definite date only a few hours away. Then, at the last moment, relief came. It was overwhelming — and it was unmistakable. No censorship or repression could prevent every German from seeing that almost every other German was miserable on that fateful Wednesday morning and happy the same evening. Never before in history has a people welcomed, with spontaneous and obviously sincere enthusiasm, the Prime Minister of a country with which they had been expecting in a few hours to be at war. We have all of us been hoping for some reaction of the human spirit against the stimulated passions, the indoctrinated hatreds, and the corroding fears which are undermining the structure of European civilisation. Was there, in the intense emotions and their expression on September 28th, the first beginning of a psychological force sufficient to give the world at last the reaction and the release for which it has been so long and vainly hoping ? It is possible. It is *just* possible.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BASIS OF A GENERAL SETTLEMENT

I HAD written this and the following chapter (apart from a few minor passages) before the danger of war was as imminent as it now is, though it was clearly looming in the future. These two chapters set out what, in my view, would be a suitable basis for the discussion of a general settlement with Germany if and when the conditions should make the reasonable discussion of such a settlement practicable. I am well aware that any such proposal has at this moment an air of unreality. It will be said that proposals reflecting the attitude of a liberal internationalist, and based upon the conception that the world should become a Commonwealth, are mere academic futilities if suggested as the substance of a conditional offer to a régime based upon tribalism and a principle of racial dominance. It will be objected, too, that to conduct such an unrealistic discussion will weaken our purpose, and perhaps even invite demands by referring to weaknesses in our case about the colonies and suggesting the possibility of concessions.

I am in fact under no illusions whatever as to the likelihood that any such proposals as I could advocate would satisfy the present rulers of Germany or induce them to cease from pressing more extravagant claims by their accustomed methods. Nevertheless, after careful reflection, I am convinced that it is not useless to make suggestions of this kind, even if they have no chance of acceptance by the present régime. I believe that, on a balance of the considerations, it is best to discuss the problems in the same way, and in the same spirit, as if the conditions were now favourable for entering upon

negotiations. I would point out (to take one example) that I do not of course suggest concessions with regard to colonies except as part of a general settlement which would not only avert the present danger but put peace on a more durable foundation. Each suggestion is clearly made dependent upon the others; and the arrest of the arms race is an integral and essential feature of any arrangement. If we now have war, we should, even if we had proclaimed such a plan of general policy as I am discussing, still have whatever strategic advantages the present situation could give. And this is equally true if, without actual war, the present tension and the arms race continue and demands are presented *seriatim* as hitherto.

In these circumstances I am unable to see that any harm can result from a calm discussion of the kind of settlement which would be reasonable in a reasonable world; and I see many advantages. It is important that, whatever happens, those of us who believe we are standing for justice and reason should now cling to them. To proclaim always, and to persist in our desire to establish, a peace which is based upon intrinsically reasonable foundations and not one which is based simply upon the will of a victor and distorted by the passions of war, will not distract our effort. It will sustain it, and help, not hinder, us in securing the sympathy and aid of others.

I propose therefore to discuss the situation as I would if we were dealing with a Germany with whose Government reasonable negotiation would be immediately practicable, while entertaining, as I have already said, no illusions as to the actual situation. If this should be published when we are actually at war, I still think it would be a good thing to have said it; and I still think that it would be a good thing for the British Government to have made such a declaration as I am going to propose.

In what follows I shall be discussing only the position of Great Britain in regard to Germany. I have not considered the modifications and extensions which would be



necessary after consultation with France and other countries associated with us. I assume, of course, that there would be such consultations and that the substance of any announcement would be agreed. Nor am I dealing with the questions that arise with regard to the other Axis Powers, Italy and Japan, though obviously every part of the whole international problem is interrelated. I am concerned to advocate a general declaration of policy and to suggest its general character, not to work it out in full detail, which would take me far beyond the limits of this book and the time now available. For my restricted purpose the best method is to discuss the issue as it concerns Great Britain and Germany, and this is what I now propose to do.

### *The General Perspective*

To give a proper perspective we must recall some of the general conditions which we have already described.

(1) In Central Europe Germany is in any case in a position to exert a greater influence than during the fifteen years after 1918. It should be recognised too that in the economic field the German idea of "Mitteleuropa" corresponds to a strong natural tendency towards the complementary interrelation of a highly industrialised Germany with the mainly agricultural regions immediately to the east and south-east. The old Austria-Hungary served to give a measure of economic unity to this area, and after the re-drawing of the map in 1919 there was no adequate factor of economic unification in this region, so that a resurgent Germany was bound to play a leading rôle. With her paramount economic importance in this area — represented for the East Central European States by her large bulk purchases of their foodstuffs and raw materials — a great political influence must inevitably be associated. But such an influence, which up to a certain point we should not seek to oppose, becomes excessive when it threatens the inde-

pendent existence of the countries concerned — a threat which is both alarming to them and indirectly dangerous to ourselves. In giving them, however, guarantees against aggression (as we have done to Poland, Greece and Rumania) and economic facilities, our principle of policy should always be that we are not trying to drive Germany out of what may reasonably be regarded as her "natural" market — or even to prevent her from having by far the largest share in it — but only to enable these countries to survive as independent national States.

(2) But that is not all. We must face some unpalatable facts. The Versailles settlement reflected Germany's military inferiority in 1918 to the combination against her. The Nazi régime has been able to excite and exploit her resentment and wounded pride, the sense of defeat, of which losses of territory and rights have been a continuing reminder. Germany has retrieved some, but not all, of the losses she sustained, while in Austria and Czechoslovakia she has gained what was not in her sovereignty before the war. Meanwhile the temporary military inferiority, upon which the Versailles *Diktat* was based, exists no longer. The consequences must follow. The new Germany is unlikely to be content with rights and possessions which, in sum-total, are less than those of the Germany of 1914. It will be something if she demands no more and is ready, in making her account, to set what she has more against what she has less.

### *The Time-table*

It is, of course, useless to discuss how we should frame a policy as if we had the initiative, freedom of choice and an assured time to develop it — as we and France had for fifteen years from 1918. The initiative is largely in other hands. Events hurry upon each other, and continually change the temper and perspective. Concessions which might properly have been included in a comprehensive plan may be demanded *seriatim* before a general pro-

posal can be made, with whatever speed the necessary work is now undertaken. We do not know when, or in what form, a direct challenge will be made to our own interests and possessions or to France, to whose defence we are pledged. We may be forced to yield or resist on a specific issue, and the consequence in either event may be to make impossible the development of any general policy.

For this reason any suggestion now made must necessarily be subject to the reserve that, whatever plan is proposed, it may have to be changed. More than that, every plan made by the Government must be elastic and adjustable to the conditions of the actual negotiation. There is therefore a valid reason for the Government not to publish a plan in all its full detail.

This reason should not, however, be urged to excuse a delay and a secrecy as to the main principles and purpose of our policy, which would be both unjustifiable and fatal.

For any tolerable policy of constructive peace two things would, I suggest, be essential.

The Government should prepare fully, in detail and urgently, a comprehensive plan, including perhaps alternatives for different circumstances, but with decisions already taken as to what course would be followed in each case. And the preparation would need to be not only technical, but psychological in the sense that influential groups must be so far persuaded that there will be no risk of their making an effective opposition at the last moment.

Secondly, even though some freedom of negotiation would need to be reserved by secrecy as to detail, the Government should be willing to publish the broad principles of a general and comprehensive plan, covering questions which are not, as well as those which may be, the subject of immediate demand. Only by accepting the risks and responsibilities of such a course can we hope to utilise whatever chances there may be of a "general settlement".

*Method of Negotiation*

It is often urged that, if and when conditions permit of the negotiation of a general settlement, a "general world conference" should be immediately summoned to work out a general settlement on a world-wide basis. I do not altogether agree with this proposal as usually put forward. It is possible to imagine circumstances under which it would be well to have an urgent conference, *e.g.* under the invitation of the President of the U.S.A. But such a conference would in that case, I think, best be limited in the first instance to a few countries, and would aim rather at postponing an immediate danger, and laying down principles for further work, than arriving at actual solutions. A general World Conference, like that of 1933, if summoned to discuss complex problems covering a wide field, rarely, if ever, achieves a solution unless that solution has already been worked out, in its main lines, between those mainly concerned before the Conference begins.

National preparation is the first necessity; then contact between specialists in different spheres and in the principal countries concerned, in varying combinations. At one stage there would be contact between specialists of countries such as our own and France; at another with those of Germany; the whole of such specialist work being, of course, within a framework of governmental decisions, definite in principle but not too rigid in detail. In this way provisional agreements (each subject to the reservation that its final adoption would be dependent upon agreement in other spheres of negotiation) might gradually be built up so as together to form a general settlement. With such preparation a World Conference can do much. It can elaborate a plan already proposed and in principle agreed on by those mainly concerned. It can secure the adhesion of other countries who are interested, but whose assent is less important than

that of the principals. But it is no substitute for preparatory negotiations and cannot succeed without them. Except on a limited and relatively unimportant issue no agreed policy will come out of a World Conference at its conclusion unless it has been put into it at its commencement.

What, then, should be the character and the contents of a plan of settlement? It must be, both in substance and method of presentation, acceptable to all that is, or may be, moderate in Germany. It must appeal to the world as just and magnanimous. It must be calculated not only to alleviate any immediate crisis but to strengthen the foundations of a more enduring peace. It is with each of these considerations in mind that we must discuss the possible items in a plan. There are also certain psychological conditions which must be eventually dealt with if subsequent offers are to have any chance of success — and it is to these that I address my first proposals.

### *The War Guilt Clause*

It has always been difficult for British public opinion to understand the importance of the rôle which this clause has played. The Treaty of Versailles, to which Germany was forced under duress to subscribe, states that —

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her Allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

For many years this clause was one which all those in Germany who were most hostile to the Weimar Republic and the policy of "fulfilment" found most useful as a basis of popular discontent and resistance. It is interesting to enquire why. It is not enough to say that the clause was skilfully and unscrupulously exploited. Of course it

was. But the exploitation could not have been so successful unless there was something very fundamental in German psychology to respond. This was clearly neither the exasperation of a bad conscience reminded of guilt ; nor indignation at the idea that Germany could ever be in favour of resorting to war (which the Nazi Party could scarcely represent as shameful).

The explanation is rather that the Germans felt it as an injustice that they should have been formally judged — and compelled to endorse the judgement — by a court composed of their political enemies, who had been at war with them for four years. All the diplomacy of the pre-war period had, after all, been conducted on the assumption that resort to war was available as an *ultima ratio* for any Government convinced that vital national interests were at stake.

It is no part of my purpose here to discuss the rights and wrongs of the issue in 1914. All such discussion does not really touch this point. Whatever our view of the merits of the question, the fact remains that the statesmen of the Allied Powers gathered at Paris, after four years of war, were not people qualified to give a judicial verdict on it. A verdict with the force of a judicial decision could only have been given by a court of entirely disinterested persons with all the relevant documents and witnesses before them. It is significant that, as Mr. Lloyd George records in his book *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, Lord Birkenhead, reporting to the Cabinet on November 28th, 1918, on the proposal to try the Kaiser, urged with regard to the general charge of responsibility for the war that “ we do not wish to be confronted by a meticulous examination of the history of European politics for the past twenty years ”. It would have been better, then, not to have introduced this question at all into the peace settlement and to have proceeded simply on the basis that one side had been victorious. It must be remembered that there was no precedent for imposing on

a beaten foe such an admission of guilt. It is beyond doubt that the terms of the Versailles Treaty would never have evoked in post-war Germany the intense bitterness of feeling which they did, if they had been imposed simply as the penalty of defeat and not as a punishment inflicted on a legally condemned criminal.

In law a ruling may be set aside, without any reference to the merits of a dispute, on the ground that it is *ultra vires*. And similarly the victors of 1918 might even now be well advised to declare themselves ready, as part of a general settlement, to agree to a formal cancellation of the war-guilt clause on the ground that such matters should be outside the scope of a political Peace Conference.

### *Encirclement*

Ever since Bismarck's less skilful successors forgot Russia, the fear of encirclement has been for the German people what the fear of interference with sea-communications has been for the British. The Franco-Russian Alliance at the beginning of the century, and the Franco-Soviet Pact superimposed upon the other French alliances after the war, had a similar effect upon German psychology to that which the German naval challenge in 1908 had upon our own. The attempt that is now being made to re-create mutual aid between countries within reach of Germany affords an opportunity to the Nazi rulers to exploit again all the associations of the fear of encirclement, even though what we aim at is quite obviously to ourselves only a form of deterrent against further aggression.\* In these circumstances we should clearly emphasise constantly the negative as well as the positive side of all the associations to which we are a party. For example, we have promised to come to the aid of France in case of "unprovoked aggression". This, of course, imposes no obligation upon us in the extremely unlikely, and we may say impossible, event of her being

invaded in consequence either of her initial aggression upon Germany or her support of an ally which had not suffered but initiated aggression. It would, of course, be fatal to make any statement at a time, or in a form, which could suggest any weakening of our tie with France, and obviously it would need to be in agreement with her and with her cordial assent. Subject to this condition, a very definite statement of what our defensive engagements do not, as well as of what they do, mean, might well be valuable in a general statement. In any case, we must realise that the "encirclement complex" is still one which can be very easily and effectively exploited, even when the fears in which it originated have no longer any ground. The fear of a menacing encirclement is indeed as absurd as would be a fear in America of being encircled by Canada, because of her association with Great Britain, or by South American States, because they have formed pacts of friendship. And President Roosevelt has performed a great service in commenting as he has done upon the German fears. Nevertheless, the appeal to this specific German neurosis is still very powerful. We must be prepared for a subtle development of what is understood by encirclement. In its origin, when the idea acquired its intense emotional associations, it meant an association of surrounding States which might directly threaten a Germany not yet united and strong. Any such encirclement is, of course, now entirely out of the question, but the same emotions are transferred to anything that might interfere with Germany's *Lebensraum*, her right to a place in the sun. This, too, would not be dangerous if *Lebensraum* were understood as an opportunity for supporting a great and increasing population by securing access to the resources of other countries through peaceful trade and by methods which are compatible with the life and independence of other countries. But when it is taken to involve the forcible dispossession of others, the domination and subjection of other sovereign States, it necessarily encounters the com-



bined resistance of those who fear such aggression. It is the identification of *Lebensraum* with this form of expansion, and the attempt to enlist the fears and passions associated with "encirclement" against any form of purely defensive association, that we now have to fear. This is the form of appeal upon which the Nazi Government is likely to rely both in addressing the outside world and in attempting to unite the German people behind a militant policy. We shall need to utilise every resource in counter-ing propaganda of this kind. Of course Germany has a right to access to resources outside her own frontiers, and we must make it abundantly clear that we do not wish to deprive her of this right and would indeed co-operate with her in securing it. But other countries have similar rights. There is enough for all in a properly organised world, which the nations can make if they unite to do so. The Nazi rulers have already been able to destroy a great deal of the psychological effect of the identification of Mr. Chamberlain with "peace", now that it is possible to represent him as an architect of encircling alliances. We shall find it difficult to counter this propaganda, and every possible means must be taken. Here is at least an additional argument for the proposals made in this and the following chapter.

### *Equality and Versailles*

Closely associated in German psychology with the fear of encirclement is the memory of humiliation and defeat. This is kept alive both by a moral grievance against the war-guilt clause, which has already been discussed, and by the material deprivations inflicted by the Treaty of Versailles. There are, indeed, in the Treaty several principles designed to conform with natural justice and to establish a more enduring basis for peace than the pre-war political structure of Europe. To a considerable extent these principles were carried into practice, and the framers

of the Treaty may well claim both that the peace they made was a better one than the public in their respective countries was urging them to make, and that the Treaty as a whole compared favourably with settlements made previously after long, disastrous and decisive wars. That may be true, and it may be said with reason that when countries have resorted to the arbitrament of war and one has gained complete victory, it cannot be expected that there a settlement made amid the passions roused by the conflict will be like one arranged either between two parties which had fought without a decisive issue or by a wise, impartial and disinterested authority. There is a personal and human defence for the statesmen at Paris. But it must be based upon the environment of political pressure in which they worked, upon the human passions which resulted from the war and are always likely to result from any war. It must not be based upon any pretence that the treaty is a model of objective justice. The reparation clauses, the disarmament provisions, the transfer of the colonies, the seizure of ships and other property, and many of the territorial changes, simply reflect the fact of the defeat of Germany by a coalition which in 1918 was superior in collective military strength. Some of these provisions have gone and others remain. Taken as a whole they were based, naturally and obviously, upon victory and superior strength, and could only be expected to endure upon a similar basis. But in the meantime the superior military strength has passed away. In five years of intensive rearmament and successful diplomacy, Germany has regained most, if not all, of her old military power. She is no longer confronted with an overwhelmingly superior combination. The Treaty provisions of 1920 which reflect such a superiority cannot endure.

If a general settlement should be possible it would have to include a contribution from Great Britain, perhaps of two kinds, the one relating to the conditions under which

Germany and Great Britain respectively engage in foreign trade, and the other to colonies.

### *Economic Policy*

The first of these is obviously related to the whole problem of the conditions under which international trade should be carried on. I discussed this general problem in "Recovery", in relation to the world as it was before the advent of the Nazi régime. Already it had become useless and irrelevant to preach simply the Cobdenite gospel of free trade; and the problem was then much as it would again be if we could get beyond the imminent menace of the present moment and resume an effort to restore an orderly economic system in the world. The proposals I then advocated, as so many have done both before and since, for the control of foreign investment, for an extension of functions of such international organs as the Bank of International Settlements, for the formation of "low-tariff" groups with the encouragement of a change in the most-favoured-nation clause, for a convention governing the supply of raw materials, for equality of opportunity in relation to colonies, and so on, would all become relevant again. I cannot now discuss these and similar proposals, or the modifications which are suggested by the experience and changed conditions of these last seven years. It must suffice to recall them as a reminder of the problems that lie ahead of us, if we are so fortunate as to reach them without intervening disaster.

In the meantime, as regards the specific issue between ourselves and Germany, it is possible that a solution may be found in some form of agreement upon spheres of economic influence, the one country having an advantage on the Continent and the other in the greater part of more distant trade. With this brief reference I will turn to a more direct and immediate challenge, that which relates to colonies.

*The Colonial Question*

I propose now, for the reasons given at the beginning of this chapter, to discuss the different considerations which would be involved if we were able to deal with the problem under favourable conditions with a Germany ready to accept a reasonable settlement. We must have a clear understanding of the more permanent factors as a background before we can properly approach the difficulties of any actual negotiation.

If demands are made under an immediate threat, we have only a choice between fighting or surrender. But the whole assumption on which this part of the book is being written is that it is worth while to try to frame a plan of general settlement suitable for reasonable negotiation, if and when that should be possible. What follows therefore is written as it might have been ten years ago, without regard to the special difficulties of the present time.

It is worth considering first the complex attitude of the British public towards the Colonial question ; for there is no subject in politics about which candour and honesty of thought are more necessary or more difficult. Colonies have been acquired in many and diverse ways, some but not all violent ; they have been used for many purposes, some but not all selfish ; they have been desired for many reasons, some but not all in character imperialistic. And as Anglo-Saxons we find it easy, without conscious dishonesty, to mask our motives even from ourselves. The present psychology of the British public towards the colonies is now as composite as the motives which led to their acquisition.

We acquired our overseas territories as a sequel to adventurous trading enterprise, as incidents of our sea-power, as the natural consequences of wars in which we had taken a successful part, as new supporting outposts for territory already in our charge, with a mixture of

statecraft and absence of mind. The motive was sometimes commercial, sometimes strategic, sometimes a jealousy of rivals, sometimes a subconscious instinct towards what in others we call a desire for imperial prestige ; it was not philanthropic.

It is, however, equally true that in the honourable tradition of our colonial administrators, supported by the liberalism and idealism of the nineteenth century, which was as sincere and genuine a part of our complex national psychology as our practical and commercial instincts, what was acquired as a prize was to an equal extent administered as a trust. The normal attitude of our colonial administrators, if not of our merchants, towards the native inhabitants of our colonies has on the whole been one of paternal benevolence for their welfare. And, under the influence of liberal thought at home, this has been developed into a colonial creed which genuinely makes the goal of our paternal administration its replacement by self-government.

But we must not be surprised if foreign observers, who have no particular reason to look at us with undue charity, consider British statements about our sense of responsibility for the interests of the native inhabitants to be mere hypocrisy. In this they certainly do us much less than justice. Equally, however, when we speak, as we are sometimes inclined to do, as if this sense of responsibility were the sole determinant of British policy, we do ourselves more than justice. In facing the colonial problem of our own day we need therefore at once to be honest with ourselves, and to take care always to correct our self-portraiture by looking often in the mirror of other people's judgements. Besides allowing for these differences of judgement, we must allow for certain physical and political facts. In summarising these I will leave out of account not only the Dominions but also India and all other territories in which there is a large and increasing measure of self-government.

Firstly, we must recognise that the British authorities are governing a substantial proportion of the peoples who are, in the words of the Covenant, "not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world". It is not hypocrisy, but plain sense, to say that the abandonment of these peoples to whatever form of government they could devise for themselves, or to any rival imperial Power which treated colonies as merely exploitable possessions, would be prejudicial to the interests of the inhabitants.

Secondly, other countries have interests which would be affected if British responsibility in these colonies were withdrawn. In some cases, colonial territory is contiguous with that of a more advanced state, or adjacent to it. It is obvious, for example, that South Africa is vitally interested in the character of the administration in South-West Africa and the purpose to which it is to be directed. Other countries are interested in colonies as markets for their goods, as fields of enterprise, and as sources of raw materials. The principles of British Colonial policy, though recently modified by imperial preference, have on the whole served the world well in this respect.

Thirdly, colonies have important strategic uses, as coaling stations, as bases for aeroplanes and submarines; and (in some cases at present) as a recruiting ground for soldiers in the service of the imperial Power.

Fourthly, we, France, and others hold, though under mandate, certain colonies which were formerly in German sovereignty on a disputable title (which will be discussed later), and the military situation from which their acquisition resulted has now changed.

Fifthly, and more generally, British naval supremacy cannot now give us the same measure of indisputable power which was at the basis of our colonial rule throughout the nineteenth century. We could not now alone, and in face of a partly hostile and partly critical world,

either indefinitely defend our own interests — or discharge our responsibilities.

What general conclusions should we now draw? I suggest these.

First : the colonies, our own and others, are part of a world problem. We cannot, and should not attempt to, carry the responsibility alone. We must be prepared to govern in accordance with principles which the world regards as just and acceptable, and to share in the government with other countries as they may be able and prepared to participate. This applies not only to the defence of our own interests, but to our responsibility for the welfare of the native inhabitants.

If we are prepared to abandon specific British privileges in regard to colonies under our control, it is reasonable that the other great countries, with traditions like our own, should share in the burden of defending native populations from exploitation and bad government.

Secondly : while doing all that we can, along this line, to transfer the responsibility for colonial government from an imperial to a world basis, we must recognise that, so far as and while this is not practicable, the strategic advantages of colonies cannot be sacrificed and converted to use against us ; nor can we honourably regard it as a matter of little concern that any native inhabitants should be removed from our care unless and until there is an alternative authority which can discharge its trust at least as well.

These should, I suggest, be the two strands in our present policy. But if we justify our colonial rule by the fact that we are discharging a function which must be properly discharged in the interests of the world as a whole, we must be prepared for the full consequences of that fact, as they are described elsewhere in this book.

So much for general considerations. I turn now to the position created by Germany's demands.

Should we set our teeth and concentrate only upon the

defence of the *status quo* fearing that any indication of a willingness to share our responsibilities will weaken our resistance to demands? Or should we combine a resistance to any change which would be disadvantageous both to the natives and the world with a frank and candid exposition of our ultimate, long-term policy? While I recognise the force of the arguments in favour of the first course, I have no doubt in my own mind that, on balance, the second is the right one. And it is in that belief that I begin the discussion which follows.

First, what could we prudently contribute, as part of a general settlement, to meet Germany's *economic grievances* in the colonial field?

As regards colonial trade, I suggest that we should be ready, as part of a general settlement, to return to our historic policy, abandoned only a few years ago — and offer an equal entry to all countries into our colonial markets. The reasons for this have been so frequently discussed that it is unnecessary now to cover again ground which is already so familiar, but I shall discuss something of what is involved a little later in connection with the Mandate system.

As regards *raw materials*, we must dismiss as useless (though it is true) the argument that Germany can buy our raw materials on the same terms as British manufactures — in pounds sterling. Her currency and financial system makes it much more difficult for German manufacturers to pay in sterling than to pay in marks, as they would be doing if the colonies were German. Nor is it useful to say that her currency system is her own and that she can change it if she wishes. That system is an integral part of her whole economic and political structure.

It is commonly said that colonies have little or no economic value to the country possessing them; and that Germany's claim that she needs her colonies back in order to get raw material, or to find markets for her goods, or an outlet for her population, is unsound and should



be rejected. Now it is true that the economic value of colonies is commonly exaggerated very greatly by countries which do not possess, and wish to acquire, them. It is true that in a quarter of a century of colonisation Germany had only settled about 20,000 Germans in all the German colonies which she possessed till the war; and that these colonies only represented about  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of her foreign trade, in exports and imports alike. Yes, but this is a two-edged argument, with the sharper edge turned against those who use it. If I possess something which I value at £1 and someone else at £10, that after all (whichever is right) is a reason for a transaction which transfers it from me to him, not for my jealously clinging to it. And if a country has some claims in justice to the return of a colony, it is unconvincing and merely irritating to reply that, questions of justice apart, we propose to retain the colonies because they are of little or no value.

In fact, however, those who depreciate the value of colonies exaggerate as well as those who take the opposite view. Such statistics as I have quoted do not exhaust the question. The fact that a colony is under a particular country's régime encourages the nationals of that country to acquire property, and develop enterprise within it. And the sales of the colony's products to the world in general bring an accession of wealth to the metropolitan country through the fortunes of its citizens made in the colony and both spent and taxed at home. It is absurd, for example, to contend that Holland is not richer because Dutch citizens acquired at low cost, and developed, rubber plantations in Java and Sumatra which now represent a very large capital value. Moreover, for particular classes in a country, those from which the personnel of adventurous foreign trading and colonial administration are recruited — classes of special influence in Government circles at home — the possession of colonies, directly and indirectly, increases very substantially the prospects of their sons as they seek careers. There is some force

too in Germany's contention that, with her present financial and currency system, it is a disadvantage for her industrialists to be obliged to buy colonial raw materials in a foreign currency ; and further that her present system would enable them to exploit colonies more fully than the pre-war German Government.

(Incidentally, it should be remarked on the other hand that the argument frequently used that colonies are wanted to ensure a supply of raw materials in war is, in large measure, fallacious. If a country holds the command of the sea it will be able — unless of course it is subjected to a general boycott — to import raw materials whether it possesses colonies or not ; if it does not command the sea, it will be unable to import even from its own colonies.)

What could we do in these circumstances ? I suggest that we should make the following offer. The British Government might supply Germany with the raw materials she wants in return for the goods she produces, on a ratio of exchange determined by average prices over a long period before the present currency complications were introduced ; the Government then buying the rubber, etc., from the individual planters and selling the German goods in our own markets. Such an arrangement would be consistent both with her system and with ours ; and it might well be made as a feature of a general settlement, though not, of course, as a piecemeal concession while we are still competing in an arms race.

Next, what of the *political grievances* ? In particular what of the question of prestige, which involves that of sovereignty ? Colonies are desired not only for economic reasons, but for the prestige which attaches to them ; for their use as defended coaling stations, and military, naval and air bases — for all of which purposes we use our colonies — and for the enrolment of natives available for a European war, as France, for example, uses her Moroccan possessions. It is mere hypocrisy to set aside these reasons as either frivolous or improper.

I will limit myself to a few reflections. The first is that there is an obvious relation between the strategic aspects of the question and the practicability of an enduring naval agreement. (The validity of the present one is obviously more than doubtful.)

The second is of a more general character. The fifth of Wilson's Fourteen Points, to which the Allies pledged themselves and which Germany accepted as the basis of the Armistice, provides for —

A free, open-handed and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the Government whose title is determined.

The German people as a whole, and not merely the Nazi Government, have always felt bitterly that the first part of this pledge was broken. The more moderate elements in Germany at the same time have recognised that the second part, which has been developed into the imperfect but nevertheless promising Mandate system, is of equal validity. It is, however, too much to expect that even moderate opinion in Germany would ever have willingly accepted a principle of international responsibility for colonial administration for one category of non-self-governing colonies only, those which were once in German sovereignty. Any attempt to revive this principle, in connection with whatever form of international authority (which need not necessarily be the present one), would have little chance of success, unless we were prepared, as I would urge that on every ground alike of right and expediency we should be, to accept an international responsibility in respect not only of mandated areas but of other non-self-governing colonies.

The question of the *native interests* remains as a factor of the greatest difficulty, and of decisive importance, in the present colonial issue. The methods and the motives

by which colonial territories have been brought within British rule, whether under a sovereign autocratic government now abandoned over a large part and partially replaced by self-government in another large part, or under the Mandate system, have been extremely varied. But throughout there has been, in addition to all national and individual interests, a very genuine and on the whole increasing sense of responsibility and trusteeship for the interests of the inhabitants. This is, of course, specifically expressed in the Mandates for the ex-German colonies, but it is implicit in the government of British colonies also. Now, there was some hypocrisy in the reasons given for the transfer of the German colonies in 1919. Some, but not all, German colonies were badly and harshly administered. In some the health services reached a high standard; and there have been some German colonial administrators who had both the outlook and the ability which, under favourable conditions, might have ranked their names with Lugard and Lyautey. The reason for transfer was victory in war and it would have been better to say so frankly. It is highly regrettable that, during the Weimar Republic, the mandate of some at least of the colonies was not allotted to the German Government. That opportunity has gone, and the prospects of the natives under any transfer that might now be made would obviously be very different. We are not now considering transfer under *force majeure* but what might be done on the assumption that an agreed settlement is possible.

Clearly no such settlement would be satisfactory unless it took as its first principle the adequate protection of the interests of the native population and provision for their future welfare. Without that, colonising Europe would have failed in its trust and most countries would be breaking their pledges.

But equally it would be out of the question to attempt to subject the transferred colonies to a special régime, or to

an international supervision, which kept them in a class apart from other colonies. What is clearly needed is a standard régime for colonial administration which will apply to other colonies as well.

The principles of trusteeship expressed in the Mandate system, and implicit in the earlier colonial policy of Great Britain and Holland, moreover applied not only to the interests of the natives but to those of the world in general, and took the form of equal entry for the goods and economic enterprise. This aspect of trusteeship also needs equal recognition and development in any new régime. Its actual form may, however, require to be different as a consequence of the profound change in the general commercial policy of the world. "The open door" in the fullest sense of the prohibition of tariffs has long gone. "Equal tariffs" may be impracticable in view of the tendency to form economic groups with lower reciprocal tariffs. There is no reason why colonies should be excluded from what may be the considerable advantage, in certain cases, of participating in such arrangements, if they enter on the same conditions as self-governing States, on the basis of reciprocal benefits. The essential principle is met if the metropolitan country, as such, has no advantage in this respect from the fact that it governs the colony, any country being admitted on the basis of the reciprocal benefits it offers and receives. The principle should be that the commercial policy of a colony would be what its inhabitants would themselves adopt in their own interests if they were responsible and prudent.

We must further recognise that, under any conditions, there would be difficulties, amounting to an impossibility, in the return of some of the German colonies; and indeed it would probably be in Germany's interest, too, to receive something equivalent in total value to what she lost rather than the identical territory. Another factor that must also unhappily be taken into account is the strategic

consequence of any re-allocation of colonies that might be followed by their use for military purposes.

In these circumstances it is obvious that the question of the German colonies merges into a general colonial problem and that this is essentially a world problem. Great Britain cannot settle it alone, and indeed cannot make the same contribution, if others hold back, as she could properly make if they co-operate. It is equally clear that, as the leading colonial Power, she should take the initiative in the action required. I suggest, therefore, the following course of action.

Great Britain should be ready to initiate consultation, with a view to a general conference, between the Great Powers and the Colonial Powers which do not come within this category, concerning the two questions of (a) the German claims and (b) the principles of a standard régime for colonial administration.

I suggest that Great Britain should announce beforehand that she will advocate the following principles, and would, in conjunction with others, be ready to take the action they involve :

(i) The metropolitan country should not, by virtue of its authority, obtain any economic advantage for its nationals, by way of discriminating tariffs or dues on either imports or exports, or by preferences in regard to the development of economic enterprise, which is not available to the nationals of other countries upon the same conditions.

(ii) No native troops should be enlisted except for police work and local defence.

(iii) Metropolitan powers should report to, and be open to criticism from, a Commission composed predominantly of persons with expert knowledge from the countries possessing colonies, with some from other countries. Such a Commission should have the right to arrange visits of inspection.

(iv) Administration should remain at present for the

most part in the hands of specific national Governments, subject to the provision under paragraph (iii).<sup>\*</sup> The way should, however, be prepared for international administration by (a) the admission to the colonial service of each country of some young officials of other countries, (b) the selection of at least one colony for an experiment in full international administration, by an international staff recruited like that of the League of Nations, and responsible to the Commission described in paragraph (iii).

The difficulties are obvious. Only a beginning could be made for some time to come. And it is clear that Great Britain could not be expected to apply the whole of these provisions to her own colonies if others stood out. Difficulties would also arise as to areas which are intermediate between non-self-governing colonies and the self-governing Dominions, to which, of course, these provisions would not apply at all (*e.g.* Ceylon). It might be well to prepare as a first step to extend the new régime to all tropical colonial Africa, a substantial part of which is already subject to provision against some forms of economic discrimination under the Congo Basin Treaty.

(v) There remains the question of what, on the assumption that there is some real liberty of choice and that acceptable conditions are practicable, should be offered. Upon this I will only now remark that contributions must clearly come mainly from countries now holding mandates, but need not necessarily be confined to them.

There may seem to be unreality about any such proposals in present circumstances. But this applies, in varying degrees, to all proposals for a policy of conciliation and concession that is not merely one of surrender.

(vi) There is one class of colonial possessions which need special consideration. What of the Gibaltars? Is it justifiable that the Rock should be held by a country other than that in which it is situated? In a general settlement should not such places be handed back?

Well, the matter is not quite so simple as that. The importance of the Rock is not as a residence for those who live on or under it ; it is that it commands (or commanded) a world highway. If and while the marine half of the world was policed and pacified by *Pax Britannica*, as until recently it was for over a century, it was not unsuitable that a barren fortress should be in the hands of the imperial sea-Power. And so long as its return is chiefly desired in order that a strategic advantage may be reversed — and reversed mainly for the benefit of those who have no more natural right to it than Great Britain — the case against cession is obvious.

Yes, but the converse of this argument is equally true. The British Navy is no longer supreme over all others ; it has accepted, and now welcomes, parity with the American ; and, even apart from the American Navy, it can no longer expect to be superior over the combined strength of all other fleets. On the seas, as well as on land, we are now past the time when the domination of a single Power is tolerable to the world. The ultimate conclusion is surely clear. The task of policing the seas and preserving freedom of movement for all who use them is still essential, but it should be shared and not monopolised. The duty should be placed "in commission". When a particular point of vantage owes its importance, not to its connection with an adjacent or contiguous country but to its strategic control of a world highway, the problem concerns the world. A form of international control is ultimately the right solution, and as soon as it is possible to establish such a form of authority, such places surely ought to be entrusted to its guardianship, under trust to safeguard world rights which depend upon it.

We should then, I suggest, make it clear that we recognise this and would gladly surrender the possession of such places to such an authority. If America, for example, suspects our retention of Gibraltar, let us make it clear that we would gladly collaborate with her in



working for the creation of such an international control, in which both she and we would participate, and would at once hand over the Rock as soon as the control can be established with adequate safeguards. Such an international control might well be compatible (subject to the appropriate military precautions) with a political transfer, to Spain, for purposes of civil government.

Before leaving the question of colonies it is well to emphasise once more that, if we are to see it in its true perspective, it is not enough to assess the value of colonies in terms of the statistics of migration, imports and exports, even if we then add something for their strategic value. We must make an effort to see what colonies mean to the countries which are demanding them. To Germany the lost colonies are now the principal reminder of a defeat in war due to a combination of strength against her which no longer exists; and are therefore associated with the prestige which a resurgent nation expects from its new power.

And there is more than that. A sense of suffocation — a species of claustrophobia — has been among the chief causes of tension and discontent out of which the forces making for war have developed. It is not a mere coincidence that the three countries from which the menace of war comes are precisely those which, in relation to their population and industrialisation, are the most scantily endowed of all great countries with natural resources and raw materials in territory now under their political sovereignty and control. The economic suffocation from which they have suffered is actually due, in the main, not to this disability in itself but to the fact that, since the world financial crisis of 1931, every country has increasingly turned in upon itself, concentrated on its own home markets and excluded others from them. But we must admit that this universal increase of protectionism in which we have all joined — whether justifiably or excusably does not affect the point — has in fact increased

the importance to a country of having markets within its own political control. We have recognised this by the imposition of preferential tariffs in our own non-self-governing colonies, as well as by negotiating reciprocal preference with the Dominions. Indeed, it is the increase of impediments to foreign trade that constitutes the one justification, whether it is sufficient or not, for our abandonment of the policy of no discrimination in regard to our dependent colonies. What is important is the fact that, though "economic suffocation" is due to many other causes, it is in fact ascribed to the loss of the colonies. And though it is true that this is largely a fallacious belief, and that the passions associated with it have been deliberately worked up and exploited by the Nazi régime, it is also true that they could not have been worked up to the present point unless there was already something to work up. And what counts in political tensions is not the material facts at the basis of a grievance but what people think, and still more what they feel, about it.

I have tried to translate a policy leading up to a general settlement into concrete terms. The reader may well find himself more sceptical about the practicability of such a policy when he has considered such an attempt than when he thought of the policy only in generalities. He will doubtless ask himself again, Could we possibly offer so much? If we did, could we really hope that it would conciliate and make possible a general settlement? I can give no confident answer to either of these questions. But clearly the attempt to translate generalities into a concrete programme must be made if we are to face our dilemma sincerely and realistically. And I invite the reader to make his own alternative programme.

No single, or even repeated, declaration of a constructive policy, however wisely it may be conceived and expounded, can of course in itself be expected to persuade and convert the mind of Germany. If the out-

look of the German people is to be changed, this change must probably come as the gradual result of what they perceive to be the actual direction of policy throughout the rest of the world. Action only, and not words alone, will convince.

Nevertheless, the bold and clear enunciation of the policy will be an indispensable part of this process. If, therefore, we are able to form such a policy for our own guidance, we should, I would urge, state it and proclaim it clearly. If it is to have any considerable result, it must of course be not only comprehensive in its scope, it must be published as widely and effectively as possibly and with the full authority of a deliberate Government statement.

Is it possible to draft such a statement in such a form that it would do more good than harm? The difficulties are great and obvious. But I should be evading my task if I did not make an attempt.

I will therefore sketch the kind of announcement that I suggest could and should be made, if the Government decided to pursue such a policy as is outlined in this book. The announcement should be made in a White Paper carrying the fullest possible authority, and it should be circulated simultaneously to all Governments throughout the world. It should be accompanied and pursued by a full-dress speech by the Prime Minister. It should be given the widest possible publicity in every part of the world.

A document designed for such a purpose should of course have a Wilsonian elevation of tone and be written in the classic and chiselled style which helped the Fourteen Points to carry the world in 1918. I cannot emulate such a style and will not attempt it. I can only suggest the substance, with the proviso that, if such an announcement were in fact decided upon, the best draftsman in the country should be secured to translate it into appropriate language.

Let me repeat once more, with reference both to this chapter and the one that follows, that I am under no illusion as to the acceptability of what is here discussed to the present German Government. The proposals are based upon a fundamentally different conception of international relations. But that is, in my opinion, no sufficient reason to prevent us from making a clear and comprehensive statement of our own outlook and policy — and addressing it, not to one Government, but to all the countries and peoples of the world.

A comprehensive policy would, of course, need to deal with much more than I have included in the draft that follows. It would need to take into account the Far East as well as Europe and be addressed to the ambitions of Italy and Japan as well as Germany. A White Paper would therefore have to be enlarged for this purpose, or perhaps to be supplemented by others. It will, however, meet my present purpose — which is to suggest what a manifesto on broad policy would be like — if I write with the one danger of Germany in mind. That is, after all, the central problem.

## CHAPTER

### A DRAFT MANIFESTO OF BRITISH POLICY

*[Note. — Since this statement embodies the policy previously discussed, it necessarily involves some repetition both of substance and sometimes of phrasing. To make this less intolerable to the reader, some facts are put more briefly than would be desirable in an announcement published by itself. The part about colonies, for example, would require considerable amplification.]*

*The following draft will, however, perhaps serve to indicate the kind of Government statement that might be made if the policy indicated in it were accepted.*

*Any actual announcement would, of course, be made in the name of "H.M. Government", and that expression, or "the British Government", would frequently recur. I have tried to avoid either, in case some rash quotation should possibly at any time suggest that this is anything more than a purely personal suggestion by a private person.]*

WE consider it desirable, at this juncture of world affairs, to make a broad and general statement of the principles upon which we are basing our foreign policy and the purposes to which it is directed.

No such statement can, of course, serve as an automatic guide, or an unconditional pledge, as to the action which would be taken in every issue that may arise in a changing international situation. The world includes many sovereign States of which seven are Great Powers, and no one of them has the power or the right to determine its own policy beforehand in such a way that it cannot be in any respect modified in relation to future developments in the policy of other countries or under the pressure of new events that cannot be exactly foreseen.

Nevertheless, the statement which follows does constitute a pledge that we shall pursue the policy which it describes so far as it is in our power to do so, including the

proposed contributions at the expense of Great Britain which are indicated, subject only to the conditions stated and as a part of a general settlement.

It is in the hope that it may help to arrest the present march of events towards a crisis which, sooner or later, will bring a general war, with all its incalculable hazards and its inevitable disasters for all countries, that this announcement is now made. Countries which are dissatisfied with the present situation will, it is believed, be thus in a better position to decide how to direct their future policies, whether to collaborate in a settlement by which they can obtain without war a large measure of satisfaction for their desires, or to attempt the hazard of war with all its consequences. It may be, of course, that the demands of the one side will, in any event, be such as to seem intolerable to the other. In that case, war must come : and Great Britain, after having done her utmost to preserve peace, will then defend the integrity of her institutions and her national independence, and give aid to the countries with which she is associated, with the same strength and resolution as in the past.

But the general desire of all peoples for peace is so strong and deep that it may well prove even now that an accommodation is possible. The losses that would inevitably be sustained by all countries in a general war are so great that one side may be ready to take less than it would desire, or may believe it could obtain by war ; and the other side may be ready to give more than it considers just, or may believe it could retain by war. It is upon this that the hope of a settlement depends, and it is with the intention of giving it a better chance of realisation that the present initiative is being taken.

### *The Treaty of Versailles*

We propose to state with complete candour the British attitude towards the Versailles settlement. As Germany

claims, that settlement was not in any true sense negotiated but imposed. After four and a quarter years of disastrous and destructive conflict, the Allied and Associated Powers were in a position to insist upon their own terms. This was not due to any inferiority either of valour or military skill on the part of Germany and her associates, but to the fact that she was confronted by a larger combination of powers and resources than had ever before been engaged in a war. Both the method of negotiation at Paris and many of the actual provisions of the Treaty reflect this military position. We do not contend that the terms as to reparations, unilateral disarmament, the cession of colonies, or, in some cases, the territorial provisions, are such as could have been negotiated without a war, or after a war with an indecisive issue, or would have been approved by a detached and impartial authority concerned only with establishing the best foundation of an enduring peace. This is not to impute blame to the statesmen who made the Treaty. When there has been a resort to war, and the conflict has resulted in the victory of one side, it is impossible to expect that the resulting settlement will be the same as one negotiated without war, between countries in an equal position at the time. It is extremely unlikely that any treaty so made will be free from inequitable provisions which will be deeply resented and will in time create the danger of another war to reverse the result. The passions generated in war usually make an equitable settlement impossible. This has always been so in the past, and it is likely to be so again, if mankind is afflicted with another comparable struggle.

A settlement conducive to enduring peace can only be made if it is negotiated peacefully, without either war or the menace of superior force, between countries desiring such a settlement and dealing with each other upon equal terms.

We fully recognise the fact that the temporary inferiority of strength of Germany to a combined opposition

no longer exists. There can be no question now of any inequality of status or of rights. We wish to state in the most emphatic terms that we are not attempting, nor do we desire, by any combination of national strength and alliances to re-establish the inequality which resulted temporarily from the last war or in any way to pursue a policy of "encirclement".

We must state, however, no less emphatically that we will spare no effort, both in national preparation and in diplomatic arrangements with other countries, to prevent the equality which has been reached being succeeded by a reversed inequality of strength and diplomatic position which would now subject our own country and countries associated with us to the acceptance of dictated terms. If such a situation should arise, whether through or without a war, the melancholy history of the last twenty years would doubtless be repeated with the rôles reversed. Mankind would have no prospect except one of successive wars with alternating fortunes, in which victors and vanquished, and indeed the whole of European civilisation, would be involved in a common and complete destruction. This would be the inevitable result of a general war. But the result of the acceptance of dictated terms, similar to those which would be imposed upon defeated combatants in war itself, would be also intolerable. Since this is so, we desire to make it clear that we can in no case buy a short respite of peace at the price of subjecting our country to such a fate. Rather than submit to a loss of our position as a Great Power with equal rights and status, or to an essential sacrifice of our heritage and of our institutions, we should be compelled, in spite of our ardent desire for peace, to accept the challenge of war. It would be a betrayal not only of the national heritage, but of European civilisation, to act otherwise.

With this reservation, we desire to make it clear that we realise and accept the consequences of the termination



of the period of German weakness dating from the Armistice of 1918. Any remaining injustice and inequality in the Versailles Treaty provisions should now be removed. We recognise that a resurgent Germany will expect, and should be accorded, not only full equality of status but also rights and possessions which in sum total are equivalent to those enjoyed by the Germany of 1914. This does not mean that everything in the Treaty must now be cancelled. It is obviously impracticable, and would presumably not be desired by Germany, that the 1914 political structure of Europe should be re-established. Germany has already secured the removal of many of the unequal provisions of the Treaty. Reparation is ended; there are no unequal disarmament restrictions or inferiority as regards armament preparations; the Rhineland demilitarisation is ended; the Saar has returned to Germany. In addition, Germany has incorporated in the Reich what was not before within her sovereignty. These changes may reasonably be taken into account, as some offset against remaining inequalities imposed by the Treaty, in restoring a position equal to that which preceded the war. For what may remain to complete the account, we are prepared to make a substantial contribution along the lines which will be hereafter indicated.

The following suggestions are designed to give both moral and material satisfaction to Germany; as a counterpart to a settlement ensuring a durable peace, and when added to what other countries may contribute to the same end, they should, it is hoped, make such a settlement possible.

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### *The War Guilt Clause*

The clause in the Treaty of Versailles which refers to the responsibility for the European war of 1914 reflects the conditions under which the Treaty was drafted. We can understand that the German people have resented

the clause as prejudging an issue which should have been left to the impartial verdict of historical study. The Paris Peace Conference was a political and not a judicial body, and it was necessarily under the influence of the passions evoked by a long and bitter war. The acceptance of the clause by Germany cannot be regarded as a voluntary admission of responsibility, since Germany had no option but to sign the Treaty. We consider, therefore, that the whole question of responsibility for the war of 1914 should be left to the judgement of posterity, and that no *ex parte* affirmation with regard to it should be included in the legal instruments governing international relations. In accordance with this principle we are prepared to propose a formal cancellation of the war-guilt clause.

### *Abrogation of the Treaty of Versailles*

We recognise that the period of the Treaty of Versailles has ended, and are willing to assent to a procedure which would signalise this in the most formal and unmistakable manner. There is much in the Treaty which has already been abrogated ; there are other provisions which will need modification by agreement ; while there is, of course, much, as Germany would doubtless both desire and agree, which in substance must remain. When agreement has been reached on what should remain, and what modifications should be made, we would assent to the negotiation of a new treaty, and to the formal cancellation of the existing Treaty simultaneously with the entry into force of the new one.

The Treaty of Versailles, of course, does not stand alone. It is intimately connected in certain respects with the other peace treaties, in particular those of St. Germain, Trianon and Neuilly, all of which have been modified and require further modification.

The best procedure would appear to be that, after a period of negotiations between the principal Powers

concerned and due prior preparation, there should be a World Conference with a view to a European settlement to be embodied in a new treaty or treaties. In such a conference the opposed belligerents in the last war would negotiate upon equal terms together with each other and with countries which were neutral in that war. The existing tension in Europe doubtless makes the task of arranging a new settlement through a general conference one of extreme difficulty ; and no such conference could hope to succeed except as the culmination of a long period of preparatory work and successive direct negotiations between pairs and groups of countries. But the obstacles are not insuperable and the conditions which make such a task difficult also make it necessary. A peace settlement negotiated in this way upon equal terms, after a period of twenty years without any general armed conflict extending throughout Europe, should at least have a better chance of establishing the foundations of an enduring peace than one made under the conditions of 1919.

### *International Trade*

The increased part which Governments take in controlling and directing economic activities — to some extent in all countries, though in varying degrees — creates new international problems in foreign trade. Germany, for example, has in virtue of her special economic and financial system certain competitive advantages in regard to foreign trade. She also suffers certain special difficulties in securing the foreign exchange required to purchase raw materials and other essential imports produced by countries to which she is not specially qualified to export.

We should be willing to co-operate with Germany in finding methods of meeting her particular requirements, which are adjusted to her economic and financial system. For instance, the question of raw materials is not merely, or mainly, a part of the colonial problem which is dis-

cussed below. It is also a problem of securing conditions of trade which can provide the requisite foreign exchange for purchases from sovereign States. Since Great Britain is dependent upon the maintenance of a large world trade, she will be compelled to maintain this trade, and to adapt her economy and her methods to whatever extent may be necessary in order to do so. But at the same time we equally recognise the needs of Germany in this respect. It is possible that the solution may be found in part in the recognition of spheres of special economic influence. We recognise, for example, the naturally complementary character of the economic relations of Germany and a number of the countries in the South-East of Europe. We would therefore be ready to consider modifications of the most-favoured-nation policy which would imply and facilitate a German position superior to our own in such regions, as a counterpart of a settlement satisfactory to Great Britain in other respects.

### *Colonies*

The part of Germany's claims which most directly affects Great Britain is that which relates to colonies.

We propose to discuss the conditions under which we consider that this problem could be dealt with *as part of a general settlement*. Otherwise what is suggested would be impracticable.

The German Government have asked for the return of the colonies ceded under the Treaty of Versailles and now held under mandate by the former Allies. They do so on the ground that the transfer of these colonies was unjust ; that it was inconsistent with the Fourteen Points of President Wilson, which were accepted by the Allies before Germany disarmed under the Armistice ; that the grounds assigned for the transfer were false ; and that Germany needs the colonies to supplement her economic deficiencies, to find an outlet for her population, and as a source of raw materials.

As regards the general justice of the transfer, the truism which applies to so much else in the Treaty applies here also. Where there is a resort to the arbitrament of the sword, it is not to be expected that the subsequent settlement will be of the same kind as one negotiated without war between equals or determined by an impartial authority concerned only with abstract justice or the re-establishment of conditions conducive to a lasting peace. In this particular case, however, such a reply does not exhaust the question on grounds of justice. Point V of the Fourteen Points referred to "a free, open-handed and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the Government whose title is determined".

We appreciate the criticism that in fact the allocation, under mandate, of the German colonies was based upon the military position at the time rather than the above principles. It is to be noted, however, that the words which relate to the interests of the native populations are as valid as the rest of the provision; and the Mandate system accordingly imposed conditions upon the Mandatory Powers who have been administering colonies formerly under German sovereignty. We consider that this problem should be capable of solution as part of a general settlement. If such a settlement is possible we should be in favour of a conference of all the Great Powers and other countries having colonies, with a view to dealing with the two principal questions at issue. The first is that of making agreed changes in the present allocation of colonial territory. The second, which is closely related to the first, is that of agreeing upon principles of colonial administration. We suggest that these principles should in general be based upon those now laid down in the Mandates and in the Congo Basin

Treaties. We propose that colonial Powers should be responsible for conducting their administration in accordance with these principles to an appropriate international authority. And we propose that the same system should be applied to non-self-governing colonies whether they are now under mandate or not; that is whether they were formerly in the sovereignty of Germany or of other colonial Powers.

*(This part should be amplified in a form suitable at the time of the announcement, on the basis discussed in the preceding chapter.)*

In addition, Great Britain would be ready to go further. Colonial trade for every country is a small part of its foreign trade. Germany's colonies, for example, represented about only  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of her foreign trade before 1914, and, though this proportion might be somewhat increased, it would in any case be small in comparison with the importance of her exports to, or imports of raw materials from, the rest of the world.

Great Britain made three years ago a proposal designed to remove any grievances as to the availability of raw materials. The enquiry then instituted brought out the fact that, with few and unimportant exceptions, all raw materials are sold on the same terms to all purchasers, the metropolitan country governing the colony seeking no advantage in this respect for its own nationals.

We recognise that this does not meet the German case, for one result of the German currency system is that it is much more difficult for her merchants to buy in sterling or francs than in marks. This difficulty could be met by the supply to Germany of such raw materials as are produced in British territory, and are not available in sufficient quantity from the German colonies, on what in effect would be a barter basis: *i.e.* Great Britain could supply these raw materials in return for German goods on a ratio of exchange determined by average prices over a period prior to the present currency

difficulties — buying such materials through a central organisation from the individual producer and similarly disposing in British markets of the German goods supplied in return.

In addition, since most raw materials come from, and most foreign trade is conducted with, sovereign countries and not colonies, Great Britain could collaborate in trying to secure general tariff and other conditions which would increase the foreign trade of Germany, as of other countries, and thus furnish her with additional foreign exchange available for her general needs.

It is obvious that Great Britain can only take action of the kind proposed above if other countries will co-operate and if there is a general settlement which puts an end to the competitive arms race. Great Britain's population is much too great to be supported by home production alone, and international trade is essential to her. She cannot dispense with preferential conditions in her own colonial markets if her exports are shut out by differential tariffs both from foreign countries and from colonies under the control of other countries. But, on the conditions which have been stated, Great Britain would gladly make such a contribution as we have indicated to a settlement of the colonial problem which would be just alike to Germany, to the native inhabitants and to the world as a whole.

### *Policy as to the League of Nations*

Great Britain has been, and remains, a member of the League of Nations and a signatory of the Pact of Paris (the Kellogg-Briand Pact). Germany was for some years a member of the League but has since resigned her membership ; she is a signatory of the later Pact and has not renounced her signature by any formal act. It is in these facts that a basis must be sought for the diplomatic relations of the two countries.

Germany's attitude to the League of Nations has throughout the last twenty years, though in varying degrees at different times, been profoundly influenced by three grounds of criticism. In the first place, the Covenant is a part of the Treaty of Versailles and therefore associated with all that is most resented in that Treaty. In the second place, the composition of the League's membership, and in particular that of its governing body, the Council, gave a predominant place to countries which had been opposed to Germany in the last war. In the third place, Germany held that the policy which the League pursued was subject to a bias against German interests. As a particular instance of this, she complained that the League has operated as a defensive organisation for the *status quo* determined by the Treaties ; a *status quo* specially favourable to one group of countries and unfavourable to others.

We recognise the force of these arguments and, if this were all, are confident that the difficulty of co-operating with Germany through the League would not be insuperable.

As regards the first objection the solution would be simple. The Covenant could be separated from the Treaties and embodied in a new Treaty, signed separately and voluntarily after equal negotiation. Great Britain more than a year ago announced her willingness to assent to such a proposal.

The second criticism turns upon the membership of the League. The Council is, and must necessarily be, a political, not a judicial, authority. Its policy is bound to be determined by some form of compromise between, or amalgam of, the policies of the countries which compose it. Any great country, or group of countries, which is outside it will certainly find that inadequate weight is given to their claims. And undoubtedly the League of Nations in the early years after the war, without the membership of Germany and her associates, developed a policy less favourable to those countries — though to a



less extent than they usually believed — than if they had as members been exercising their full influence. With Germany's entry in 1926 it seemed that the solution had been found. Other forces were in operation, however, and the period of Germany's effective membership was too short for the League to be transformed into a fully international system with a satisfactory equipoise between the different countries and groups. There can be no doubt that if Germany were willing to re-enter with her increased strength and political power she could without difficulty secure that in the League's policy her own influence and claims counted for as much as that of any other Great Power.

The third ground of complaint would be removed in the same way. If the revisionist Powers were inside the League with their present power they would certainly be strong enough to remove any undue bias in favour of the *status quo* and to secure a revision of existing rights in all cases where, in the general judgement of world opinion, changed conditions made revision just and desirable.

Germany and her associates may, however, like the U.S.A. for different reasons, refuse to have any part in the League as it now exists or as it might be reconstituted. In that case, another basis for diplomatic relations must be found. Germany, the U.S.A. and the members of the League are all signatories of the Pact of Paris, and it would be possible to extend the operation of this Pact until it served as the nucleus of a world system which would enable changes of the *status quo* to be effected without war.

Whatever be the exact form of such a system, it is worth while to emphasise the one feature of it which we regard as of great importance for the preservation of peace. The changes in *status quo* and the settlement of disputes must, in the absence of free and *willing* agreement between the countries directly concerned, be such as seem just and reasonable to *disinterested* countries. The influence and

assistance of such countries must therefore be available, in an appropriate form, in favour of any disputant willing to accept such a settlement as against one that is not. This is the only alternative to the imposition of terms by the use or threat of force by one country or a group of countries, and therefore to the domination by one country and its associates over the rest ; and, since in a world which includes seven Great Powers no such domination is likely to be tolerated, it is the only alternative to successive wars.

Great Britain intends in any case to remain bound herself in all her foreign policy by the principles of the Covenant and to apply its provisions to the full extent that the action and attitude of other countries allow.

She will accordingly at all times be ready to submit any disputes turning upon the interpretation of legal rights for adjudication by the International Court. She will be ready to refer any political questions which are outside the scope of a legal decision to the form of third-party judgement provided by the Covenant or any similar procedure desired by the other country or countries concerned — even though these questions should involve some surrender of her existing rights or possessions. And she will in no case resort to war in breach of these principles and the others laid down by the Covenant.

In addition, Great Britain has not undertaken, and will not undertake, any form of engagement which is not, in the fullest sense, subject to the same principles. For example, she has undertaken to defend France with her full strength against unprovoked aggression. She takes this opportunity of repeating and reaffirming the positive side of this pledge. But it is opportune also to record its negative side. Great Britain — and, we confidently add, France likewise — never intended, in the reciprocal guarantees to each other, that either country should help the other in the unlikely event that the latter became involved in war through its own aggression or through

joining with some other State which had been guilty of such aggression. Should there be any remaining suspicions or fear in Germany or elsewhere that there is any such commitment or intention, or that either country is cherishing any ambition to achieve through alliances an "encirclement" of Germany or to impair in any way her position or rights, any suitable and practicable steps, whether by a clear Treaty provision or otherwise, would be taken to remove such suspicion.

Moreover, Great Britain is ready to undertake to collaborate fully with other countries, including those which desire "revision", in working out a suitable procedure for effecting changes by a peaceful process. She cannot, however, and is determined not to, make surrenders under menace. But if countries desiring change are prepared to act with her in establishing a system which secures peaceful negotiation and the expression of world opinion, she would be ready, as we have already indicated, to agree to substantial change, and to make contributions at her own expense towards it. We emphasise that no such system can serve its purpose if it does not provide for the collaboration of disinterested third parties.

As regards resistance to aggression, Great Britain's action must be limited by the physical conditions in relation to any issue, but she is ready to give such assistance as is practicable, having regard to these conditions, to any countries which may be the victims of aggression.

Lastly, Great Britain will remain a member of the League and use it as the medium of negotiation either with another member or with any other country which may at any time be prepared to negotiate through the same medium. And she intends also to assist in developing the League's work as far as practicable in the sphere of politically non-controversial questions, such as many of those treated by the social and economic sections of the League and by the International Labour Office.

In the meantime she is ready to negotiate, through

such procedure as may be appropriate, with countries which are not, and do not desire to be, members of the League. In some cases direct negotiations between two Powers may be most suitable. In other cases a conference of three or four countries may be desirable, or all those principally concerned in a given question. Great Britain is not, however, willing that such conferences shall develop an exclusive character which would restrict her relations with all outside a selected number of countries.

Let us, in conclusion, state again the main objective which is aimed at in all our policy. We desire neither to exercise domination over other free and sovereign States nor to suffer it. We believe that in a world which includes seven Great Powers it is essential that a system shall be established by the Governments to deal with questions that arise between them, or between any of them and other States, justly and without either war or the menace of war. Such a system, in which the different Powers would collaborate on an equal status, is needed not only to give a common security to all, but to enable changes to be made in existing national rights when changed conditions in relative development makes these just and appropriate. It is no part of our intention or desire to use an international system to maintain an unchanging *status quo*. We fully recognise that when a country increases in population, resources and strength, in relation to others who have at an earlier date acquired rights and possessions which corresponded with their superior relative position at that date, it will naturally expect a change in its international position and rights which will reflect its own internal development. We are fully prepared for the consideration of such claims, and are ready to make contributions ourselves towards their satisfaction, subject to the vital condition that they are considered by a properly constituted international authority in which disinterested countries, who can judge more objectively of the justice and reasonableness of any

conflicting contentions, can exercise their influence. By such a method changes can be made peaceably and with good-will, and in such a way as to establish more securely the foundations of a more enduring peace and of economic progress and development for all nations. But changes demanded under menace can bring no such results. They are bound to lead to wars in which even the victors would lose the fruits of victory. As to the form of the international system which should be created for this purpose we have our own preference, as we have shown, but we are ready to adjust our opinions to those of others, and to accept any system which meets the essential needs of the present period of world history.

### *Relations of Democracies and Dictatorships*

In addition to divergences of national interest, differences in the forms of government of the countries principally concerned in current issues of policy have unhappily aggravated the tension of the international situation. Great Britain, and France and the U.S.A. are democracies, governed through representative institutions. They need to find a method of negotiation, and of living together in a peaceful world, with countries of equal strength and resources which have adopted a different form of government.

There is no necessity for the pattern of government for all countries to be the same ; and it is quite possible for countries which are governed under fundamentally different systems to live together in peace. The indispensable condition of this, however, is that each country should deal with the others on the basis of what is relevant to their foreign relations, and should refrain from attempts to impose, by force or by intrigue, their own form of government upon countries which live under another. Every country can legitimately increase the attractiveness of its own form of government by making it so efficient

in increasing the prosperity and contentment of its own people that others will admire and emulate it. No country can do more without embarking upon a course which is bound ultimately to lead to either civil war, or international war, or both.

Great Britain's position in this matter is clear. For herself the constitution which she has evolved through her long history — a Government based upon representative institutions and universal suffrage — the constitution which, with her good-will and encouragement, has been adopted by the Dominions, is the one which her people desire and which she is unalterably determined to maintain. But while her political sympathies, other things being equal, naturally tend to be with those countries which have similar institutions, she does not desire to impose her own form of government upon others. Nor will she deflect the course of her foreign policy for considerations of internal politics. She will retain her own system as distinct from either Fascism or Communism. But she will, in all the problems of international affairs, work with either Germany on the one hand or Russia on the other so far as these countries are willing and the character of their external politics permits. She asks nothing else from other countries as the basis of their relations with herself.

### *Restriction and Limitation of Armaments*

It is evident that if the present competitive race in armaments continues it must lead to a general war. And the character of modern implements of warfare is such that a general war must be destructive of European civilisation. No settlement therefore is of any real value unless it includes a reduction and limitation of armaments. All the proposals in this announcement are of course dependent upon a settlement which includes this as an indispensable element. Much can be conceded at once,

and still more in the course of time, in the framework of a general solution which offers enduring peace as the incentive and reward. Nothing can be surrendered under menace and while the arms competition continues, since the only prospect for the country asked to make concessions would be that of vassalage or of having to fight later under less advantageous conditions?

Arms limitation is therefore indispensable. We consider that its principle should be, in the broadest terms, that of equality of strength for countries of comparable status and resources. This does not mean of course equality in every arm; it is natural that an island Power should be stronger on the sea and a continental Power stronger on the land. Nor does it, or could it, mean an equation of strength that is calculable with mathematical precision. What is needed is not an impracticable arithmetical parity, but what may be called a "political parity" — that is, a sufficient approximation to parity to give the political result of equality. Each country should be so strong that it need fear attack by no other country. No country should be so strong that it would feel itself strong enough to attack. The U.S.A. and Great Britain, for example, have secured, beyond all question, a parity of this kind between their respective navies. Whatever may be the precise comparison of ship with ship, or gun with gun, it is certain that if the relation between the two countries, now happily so cordial, should ever be under strain, the navies are so nearly equal that neither Admiralty nor Navy Department could ever tempt their respective Governments to intransigence by promising victory if it came to a fight. This is the kind of parity which, it is suggested, should exist between all comparable Powers. It is obviously incompatible with such a principle that any country should aim at being strong enough to resist, not a single country, but any possible combination. Against such a danger each country must prepare by a diplomacy which would ensure that it will not stand alone

if others join to attack it ; and such a diplomacy will not be difficult for any country with genuinely pacific intentions and only reasonable aspirations.

One further principle may be suggested as a basis for negotiations about armaments. There is a real and vital distinction, though experts may argue that it is in some cases not absolute, between war preparations which are essentially defensive and those which are capable of offence. In the first category come, for example, fixed fortifications, all measures of civilian defence against air attack, immovable guns and shore batteries, food reserves, anti-aircraft guns, interceptor aeroplanes as distinct from bombers, and the like. A Siegfried Line may ban France from intervention in Central Europe, but it brings no menace of attack directly upon France ; a Maginot Line is similarly no menace to Germany. We suggest therefore that effort should be specifically concentrated upon the limitation of these forms of military preparations which are specially or equally capable of offensive action, and should regard with equanimity and without apprehension or resentment those which are essentially defensive. As regards the air, Great Britain would welcome negotiations (as once suggested by Germany) for the elimination of bombing aircraft altogether, but coupled with a suitable control of civil aircraft to prevent substitution ; and in any case urges that all countries should be encouraged to devote their effort in a much greater proportion to air defence as distinct from air attack, *i.e.* to measures of civilian defence and a higher proportion of interceptors as against bombers.

### *The Choice*

In the dangerous world situation of the present time each country has to make a fateful choice between the alternatives presented by the policies of others. We have indicated what we consider to be the character of the



choice open to Germany. She can choose to pursue her ambitions by a process of peaceful, if insistent, negotiation. In that case she can, without the hazards, the destruction and the suffering of war, secure all that a Great Power, equal to the greatest, can desire that is not incompatible with the continued existence and sovereign independence of the other Great Powers. She can have a political influence in the world as a whole which is equal to that of the greatest of other States. She can develop and find outlets for the industrial skill and organising capacity of her people, and acquire a wealth which will lift her general standard of living to a height that has never been exceeded or perhaps attained. Alternatively she can press her ambitions beyond the point at which other Great Powers will consider them compatible with their own essential rights as independent and equal sovereign states, or by methods which, even if the objects sought were within the range of attainment by negotiation, are incompatible with peace. In the latter case the German people, and any régime which guides them in that path, will be subject to all the hazards of a desolating and incalculable war, in which even success would bring only a barren victory and Dead Sea fruit.

Great Britain will also have her choice, within the limits set by the policy and contributions of other countries, in particular Germany. If she can choose a peace which involves an equal collaboration with Germany in settling the problems which now confront the world through negotiation, her choice will be for peace and conciliation.

But if the choice presented to Great Britain is one which would threaten the continuance of her own form of government and way of life either in the metropolitan island or in the British Commonwealth of Nations, for whose distinctive and developing civilisation she has an inherited responsibility and acknowledges a continuing trusteeship ; if she is confronted with demands under menace which are incompatible with her position as a Great Power of

equal status with others and equal rights ; or if those with whom she is associated in the defence of similar institutions are threatened with aggression — then her choice will, and must, be for resistance at whatever cost.

The British people are pacific, and have, in the last few years, as in the years that preceded 1914, displayed this characteristic in a way which has sometimes created the illusion that they will yield indefinitely to a strong menace or even that they have lost some of their ancient virility. The four years that succeeded 1914 showed how fallacious was any such belief ; and if the test should again be repeated, the same stiffening of the national will to meet a challenge, the same determination to carry through to the end, would be found again.

PART V

FREEDOM AND THE SWASTIKA



## CHAPTER I

### THE STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF TWO SYSTEMS

THE perils of the moment occlude our vision, the problems of the day absorb our thoughts. But we must extend our vision if we are to find a goal for our efforts, and search our hearts for what we value most if we are to find the fortitude to endure.

Why do we value freedom and democracy, and wherein is their strength? In measuring our danger I have of necessity stressed the power which the new régimes have been able so rapidly to acquire, and the advantages they enjoy in this respect over the democracies. It is well that, before we conclude, we should glance briefly at the reverse of the medal.

Whilst our society and political system were secure, we readily took them for granted, and rarely formulated the beliefs and desires in our hearts which make us value our institutions now that they are in danger. It is well that we should now consciously recall the principles and ideals which underlie our institutions, and revive our loyalty to them by a sense alike of their peril and the contrast they offer with rival régimes. The ultimate and infinite value of individual personality; the subordination of the State to the service of its citizens; personal liberty, freedom of speech and association; equality of all before the law; increasing equality of opportunity; an equal share in electing a Parliament which has sovereign control over the Executive and is the fount of law; justice administered equally by an independent judiciary on the basis of law enacted by Parliament; traditions of humanity and mercy which temper the restraints of Government and, through the social services, utilise the resources of all to alleviate

the worst of human ills ; traditions of policy which, in regard to the dependent Empire, enjoin equal justice and progress towards self-government, and, in regard to foreign States, the peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation or third-party award ;—these ideals are, of course, imperfectly and unequally realised. But, with all their imperfections, how great the achievement alike with contemporary experience elsewhere ! And it is not from any failure to realise these ideals fully that our institutions are now in danger ; it is from a different source that their weakness and their peril come.

The appeal which is made by the dictatorship régimes is almost precisely opposite to our own. But we must not fall into the error of thinking that it is based only upon terror or that the qualities in human nature to which it is addressed are only the baser and more brutal ones. It is the tragedy of Germany and the world that the régime which came into power in 1933, and to some extent the régime which in Italy followed the March on Rome of 1922, did so by evoking and exploiting one of the finest qualities in man, his readiness — nay, even often his ardent desire — to sacrifice himself, and his ease and comfort, to the service of his fellows or of a cause which he can make his ideal. The Christian has reconciled his desire for freedom with his desire for service by the ideal of a God “ in whose service is perfect freedom ”. To the best of the German Nazi youth the God in whose service they found a similar satisfaction of their inmost, and best, desires, was the State. The tragedy is that the State is that terrible Leviathan whose embodiment is the Nazi régime. But its foundations are cemented with something of the best, as also much of the worst, that is in man's nature.

Even *Mein Kampf*, especially in its full text, is not merely a base and brutal book appealing to base and brutal instincts. It would be much less dangerous if it were. It ruthlessly attacks not only the more worthy

ideals, but many of the shams and hypocrisies, of the society in which its author wrote. And it appeals, with force and conviction, to the latent desires, especially of youth before it has suffered the world's slow contagion, for both discipline and sacrifice. We shall find no strength to meet it in an appeal solely addressed to selfish individualism and the pleasure and comforts of ease and peace. We too need the discipline and the sacrifice, but in the service of a more worthy ideal.

But the State of which a free man may be the servant is a State which is the servant of man. In the service of a tribal, not a universal, god, of a State which crushes out individual personality, there can be no freedom. Discipline and devotion to such a tyrant may produce a virile and powerful race. But at the best they can only be "hardy and beautiful slaves". *Corruptio optimi pessima*. This is the judgement of the Nazi régime — not that they have appealed only upon to what is basest in man, but that they have harnessed also something of the best and used it in the service of the worst. As they do so, and, by the nature of their being, do so increasingly, the ardour upon which they first drew (though something still remains) will begin to wane. Generous instincts and the more humane ideals will revive. Disillusionment will succeed devotion and men will desire a cause more worthy of their sacrifice.

There is, as their history has shown, something in German, as well as other, minds in which the ideals of the free democracies can find a response, if the democracies can themselves combine with these ideals the German virtues of discipline and sacrifice for their support.

If, then, no system of government can endure which does not correspond with the nature and desires of the citizens comprised within its authority, we need surely fear neither the continuance of the Fascist régimes nor any threat to our own. A State which is the servant of man may acquire and retain the willing service of men; but a State which becomes the servant of a party, a class or a clique, can in

the end rely only upon an enforced submission. A State which is based on the exaltation and supremacy of a single race cannot for ever resist the inevitable combination of other races or nations which it attempts to dominate. There may be in man a desire to tyrannise over others, but the pleasure of exercising tyranny is less than the pain of suffering it ; and in the last resort the interest of the vast majority must surely prevail. Mankind has learnt in its long history, and will not for ever forget, that there is a justice which is not the mere will of a dictator, and truth which is not merely what he finds it convenient to declare. It may give a pleasant glow to " think with the blood ", but when the momentary excitement is past the human mind must surely return to the knowledge that it is, after all, the brain which is the organ of thought. Some men may have in their nature a desire to inflict pain ; but, save in excitement, it is for most weaker than the desire to avoid suffering it — and weaker even than the instinct to show to others mercy and kindness. How then can a State endure upon a racial myth ; a justice that is the negation of justice ; a contempt of reason, truth and mercy ; tyranny over its own citizens and aggression against others ?

If, then, the strength of a régime were always proportionate to its correspondence with the desires of man, we might well be confident. And in the end our confidence would doubtless be justified. But human desires count for nothing in the sphere of government unless they are translatable into power. We must therefore enquire into the sources of power if we would understand the riddle of our day.

No system of government can endure unless it can command a force sufficient to repel any who attack it. No revolution can succeed unless those who lead it can bring a force sufficient to overthrow those who control the existing régime. In this sense all government rests upon force, but, since force is only exercised by man, all



force depends upon the human will and can only be obtained by persuasion. Force and consent are thus only the obverse and reverse of the same thing. An existing régime commands the strength which is, so to speak, the crystallisation of earlier consent and persuasion; the arms which its supporters have consented to make or pay for; the disciplined obedience of those who employ them; the loyalties and habits attached to the institutions of the State. Its strength against assault is a function at once of the force so gathered and of the will and determination of those who command it. A revolutionary movement starts with no such initial strength. It must gather its power by persuasion; it must make its appeal for this purpose to whatever ideas or passions will most effectively bring men, and therefore the force they can wield, into their service; it must paralyse the will of its opponents by subverting the loyalties of their supporters and the discipline of their servants; it must avoid, if it can, a decisive conflict till it has gathered an adequate strength to overthrow those who, at each earlier stage of the process, have the power, if they have the will, to destroy it.

In the secular struggle of authority and revolt modern arms have loaded the scales heavily in favour of authority. A disciplined force, once in possession of all the chief implements of war, and ruthlessly commanded, can shoot down, imprison, punish and indefinitely repress a vastly great number of discontented but unarmed citizens. When one man with a pike was almost as good as another, all Governments, however tyrannical in form, were necessarily based upon at least passive consent; for a great majority, incensed to the point of rebellion, might always overthrow them. With tanks and machine-guns and gas bombs authority is more securely entrenched. When Haussmann, to the orders of Napoleon III, built the straight avenues that radiate from the Arc de Triomphe, the end of the citizen's protest by barricade was already in sight. The end has now come. Rebellions can now

succeed only with external aid or when revolutionary sentiment penetrates the armed forces or paralyses the purposes of those who command them. Revolution, driven from every other refuge, can now find no home except in the Army — and to that the door will rarely be unlocked except after defeat in war. Till six years ago, democracies were still in power in most countries in Europe ; they had an overwhelming superiority of strength against any possible assailants from outside ; they had irresistible strength against rebellion from within. But success and security brought weakness with them. Internal differences on current policy distracted attention from new dangers within and without ; institutions devised for different needs seemed ill-adapted to the claims and urgent problems of unemployment and financial chaos ; the type of man brought into office by parliamentary processes was skilled in debate rather than tried in action ; sometimes inefficiency, sometimes corruption, caused indignation and resentment in those who clamoured for the redress of wrongs ; the very virtues bred in peace, the respect for personal freedom and the disinclination to adopt stern methods, were a handicap when urgent and drastic action was needed. The leaders of the democracies suffered from lethargy and a paralysis of the will.

In the democracies which had been victorious in war these faults only became obviously serious when they had already become fatal to the new democracy which was burdened with the heritage of defeat. In Germany the party of discontent was able to exploit the humiliations of the enforced surrenders to the Allies, and the distresses of unemployment and destruction for which the Weimar leaders could be made to seem responsible. To the humiliated, the dispossessed, the destitute, the democratic Government could be presented as impotent ; inefficient, lethargic and corrupt. To the young, the eager and the indignant, the Social Democratic leader appeared as a

paunchy and pasty middle-aged incompetent, utterly incapable of the drastic and urgent action which the times demanded. And to this extent at least the leaders of the Weimar régime justified their critics — that they failed to use the power they possessed to kill the growing menace to the Republic till power had passed from them. They were the victims alike of their virtues and their vices. They suffered from a paralysis of the will at the crisis of their fate — the unforgivable fault in government for which no other virtues can atone.

When, with such methods of persuasion in their own hands and with such passive assistance from their opponents, the Nazi leaders had come into office by the choice of the President, and with the assent of half the electorate, the tremendous advantage which is given by control of the armed forces of the State was in their hands. They made a very different use of it from their predecessors. The elimination of opponents, the suppression of freedom of speech and comment, the monopoly of the means of propaganda, the ruthless repression of dissent, have imposed a tyranny which has terrorised not only its subjects but the world.

But to its subjects it has brought gifts as well as restraints. In six years Germany has become one of the strongest, instead of being the weakest, of the Great Powers. Without bloodshed she has added two sovereign States to the Reich and exerted a dominant influence far beyond the range of even her extended frontiers. She has put her unemployed into either work or the army, multiplied public works, and found a margin of energy sufficient to create the strongest armed forces in the world and to demand even more than she has yet acquired. With such achievements it is no wonder that the régime should still be able to draw strength not only from fear but from the willing consent of large sections of the German people, and to convert much of the best of the nation, its readiness for self-sacrifice, its industry and competence, its aptitude

for discipline and corporate action, as well as the worst, to its own purposes.

To outward appearance, then, the dictatorship régimes may seem alike unassailable from without and impregnable from within.

All this is true, and more too — in the short run. If the autocratic régime can retain the loyal obedience of its disciplined forces ; if it can draw upon the same sources of strength for the continuance of its power which it used for its acquisition ; if it can secure adequate service by the compulsion of punishment and dispense with willing co-operation ; if it can transmit efficiency from a superior authority and dispense with individual initiative and responsibility ; if it can retain in the highest office the vigour and ability without which that office could not have been attained ; if it can prevent the growth of a hostile combination of those who suffer from its aggressions — then, indeed, it can endure and go on from strength to strength.

All these conditions may be satisfied for a time — none of them indefinitely. The strength of a repressive totalitarian State is a short-term strength ; in the long run — if there is a long run — its weaknesses must develop. Let us look at these in turn more closely.

For a time, under a sense of humiliation and injustice, a people will accept, even welcome, a harsh and tyrannical régime ; it will assent to, even call for, ruthlessness at home and aggression against others ; and when success comes it may be intoxicated before it is sated. But this is a transient mood, caused by a bitter but transient experience. As it passes, the more enduring qualities of human nature reappear. The ordinary man, in Germany as elsewhere, is in time appeased by the satisfaction of his grievances ; is sated with success ; turns once again to the aspirations which find their expression in a free régime and are denied in an autocracy.

But the rulers cannot easily so adapt themselves ;

they are based upon repression, and must perhaps continue it, and if need be increase it ; they are based upon aggression and cannot forgo it ; their power is rooted in fear and not in popularity. By an almost inevitable process, therefore, as the people turn more towards aspirations for peace and freedom, their rulers turn more to force and repression. They whip up the now jaded desire for glory by new aggressions ; but each time a bigger dose of external success will be needed for a smaller result at home ; and each time a given provocation will operate with increasing effect upon the indignant resentment of the outside world. The gulf will widen between the rulers and their people — and the external opposition to their aggression will grow in strength. Repression, indeed, may still hold down revolt, but discontent will sap the vigour of industrial energy ; it will threaten a diminished endurance of the trials of war.

In time, too, the inherent evils of autocracy will spread like a canker through the system. While the people retain the initiative and habits and will to work bred in freedom, and while the vigorous competence which revolution necessitates remains in every post of authority, autocracy enjoys the best of both systems. But initiative, inventiveness, the enduring ardour of those who know for what they work and approve it, grow in the soil of freedom and not of tyranny. Autocracy has no power of renewing the sources of a nation's strength. And it has no inherent curative process for its errors. It transmits folly as well as efficiency more rapidly and more completely through the whole system than any free government will do. In every administration mistakes are made, scandals occur, reforms are needed. But in one that is immune from publicity and from criticism, they may continue and increase till they drain away the strength of the nation. To wash dirty linen in public is an unpleasing process ; but it is better to wash it in public than not at all.

Discontent, too, may grow till it causes a contagious diminution of work, till it begins to sap discipline, till it undermines the willingness of the people to endure the trials of a war, without being curable, or even perceptible, by those in office. In free countries freedom of speech is at once a safety-valve and a warning. We know what are the discontents in our own countries; we cannot assess them in Germany; nor can its rulers. Democracies expose their sores, but autocracies whiten their sepulchres.

And the rulers themselves have no such solution as free systems afford for their own internal discontents and personal jealousies. The "appeal of Caesar" is an appeal not to an immortal people but to a single Führer, arbitrary, capricious, liable to all human frailties and the corrupting influence of illimitable power; — and in any case mortal. While the first Leader lives, with the qualities that brought him into power and the prestige of his success, the caste may hold together; his authority may suffice. But autocracies born of a *coup d'état* have not solved the problem of succession. The end of autocracy comes with the death of the autocrat.

And what is true of the internal dangers of a Fascist régime is true, and in a greater degree, of its external dangers. If it practises repression within, it lives upon aggression without. It must cement its alliances with fear and not with sympathy; and offer as its attraction not a common interest but the choice of the lesser of two evils. Here again, if through the weakness and irresolution of its future victims it can acquire an irresistible superiority of strength before resistance hardens, organises, combines, it will succeed — for a time. But unwilling allies are a doubtful support in war — and in a long war may well become enemies. And month by month the resentment and antipathy aroused by successive aggressions extend further and further beyond the reach of the power of immediate reprisal.

Year after year the ideals which the free countries defend will continue to find a response in the hearts of all the people who have once tasted freedom, alike those who still enjoy it and those from whom it has for the time been taken.

In the long run, then, the Fascist régimes are doubtless doomed ; and mankind will return to the line of progress it had been following for a century till a few years ago. But is there a "long run" — and what is the length of the run? We may have confidence in the future of humanity, but what of ourselves — our sons — and our grandsons? Even if the giant falls, may he not fall as Samson fell, bringing down with him the pillars of our civilisation? May he not even wage a successful war and hold all Europe, perhaps the world, for a generation or more under a *Pax Germanica* — a peace of death?

For if the dictatorships have long-run weaknesses they have formidable short-run advantages. Potential sources of strength are useless unless they are made actual — and actual in time. Dictatorships can certainly not endure indefinitely ; they probably cannot endure a long conflict ; but are we sure they cannot remain united in a short war? Can we hope that they will not be tempted to gamble on one? Once more I return to the familiar theme. We must mobilise our full strength with all speed ; cement our friendships at once ; make it impossible, and obviously impossible, that any aggressor could quickly succeed. We must keep alive our ideals in our own hearts, and make it known to others that these ideals can be combined with strength, with efficiency and with magnanimity. Thus, and thus only, we can hope that, if war comes, democracy and its values will at least survive ; thus, and thus only, may we hope perhaps to make the prospects of aggression too discouraging and so even maintain peace.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEFENCE OF DEMOCRACIES : SUMMARY

THE democracies must, for their defence, utilise both their own potential strength and the potential weaknesses of those who threaten them.

The advantage enjoyed by the Fascist Powers is that their maximum strength is more completely mobilised for use ; that centralised command permits instant action in either diplomacy or war ; that they can inspire fear, at once by their strength and their known ruthlessness, in all within reach. They have the corresponding weaknesses. They cannot further increase their internal strength. Centralisation of authority destroys initiative, the spirit of willing co-operation, and perpetuates and extends the results of errors and mistakes. Fear is a precarious bond of union either for subjects or for allies in the trials of a long conflict.

Democracies are slower in mobilising their full strength, but they have richer resources upon which they can now draw, and deeper springs of vitality. They have in their free systems recuperative and curative forces which can renew strength and repair error. Their strength, at home and abroad, is based not upon the fear they inspire but upon common interests, common sympathy, common aspiration, and upon active, spontaneous willing co-operation.

We need to develop this strength and repair these weaknesses.

We should consult frequently, constantly, frankly with all with whom we have common sympathies and interests. And we should make engagements for mutual aid where these are possible under conditions which enable them to



serve their purpose. The opportunities must be coolly and carefully assessed, with regard alike to the ultimate objective to be reached and the balance of forces at the moment of decision : we must neither lose an opportunity when it occurs nor delude ourselves by wishful thinking into believing that it exists when it does not. However clear our ultimate objective may be, the events of recent years have forced us to be opportunist in the detail of our policy. The changes from day to day, and week to week, make it now impossible to lay down beforehand a course of action which we can confidently pursue in each specific detail for a long period ahead. All that a book, as distinct from a daily paper, can properly do is to describe the background and suggest the goal of our efforts. But the goal must be always in our minds. We must seek ever to rebuild the foundations of a collective security, whether through the reconstruction of the League of Nations as it was originally conceived, or with substantial modifications if these should be required, or with a further development into some form of federation of free States, if that should be possible.

Our national strength, and that of the British Commonwealth of Nations, must at the same time be instantly and greatly increased. For this purpose we need at once a unity in national and imperial effort which can only be based upon a united and broad-based national Government. If that should not be immediately possible we should at once achieve something of its purpose, and facilitate its establishment, by a Committee of Foreign Affairs (or of Public Safety) comprising representatives of all sections in Parliament and considering in secret both the issues of foreign policy and the physical means we can command to enforce our purpose. But it is unlikely that we can develop our full strength except under the control of a Government which represents the whole country, and not half of it ; which is pursuing a policy which unites the nation ; and which will secure the co-operation of a commonwealth and

attract the sympathy and assistance of the world. We must therefore direct our effort to the establishment of such a Government at the earliest possible moment. Whatever changes in personnel are required, either for this purpose or to increase our administrative efficiency, must be made at once. A truly National Government must include representatives of every party ; must draw in new ability whether from within or from without Parliament. It must utilise for this purpose vacancies left by the resignation of all Ministers who, whatever their qualification for the normal tasks of peace, have shown that they do not possess the executive qualities which are now essential. And it would be valuable if the Cabinet could be further strengthened by the inclusion of outstanding personalities of the Dominions.

Within the Cabinet so strengthened there must be an inner Cabinet, on the model of the War Cabinet of 1917, which would plan the main principles of our policy and the main strategy of our defensive preparation. It should have at its service, side by side with the Committee of Imperial Defence, an Economic General Staff to advise as to the best methods of utilising our full resources both of material, money, industrial skill and personnel ; and of increasing our producing capacity by industrial adaptation and mobilisation.

The reconstructed administration should include a Minister of Defence who would transmit the principles of main strategy, developed by the above authority, throughout the fighting services as the Minister of Civilian Defence would throughout the whole sphere of civilian effort. The departmental organisation would include a Ministry of industrial Mobilisation or of Supply ; and a Man-Power Requirements Department. The authorities so constructed would carry through the adaptation of our industrial resources to our present needs ; the machinery for securing the best allocation of our personnel to the various services under peace and war conditions ; and

would at once devote itself to repairing the most obvious and urgent deficiencies of our present preparations. In particular it would prepare against the reduction of our imports in war by laying in stores of both food and raw materials ; and would increase both the scale and the pace of our combatant and passive defence measures against air attack.

To a Government so reformed the powers of compulsion to supplement voluntary service could properly, and would in this crisis willingly, be given, on the conditions that it applies not only to individuals but to industrial concerns, to wealth as well as personal service ; that the financial basis on which industries engaged in, or contributing to, our defensive preparations is reconstituted so that they will work as agents of the State and not servants of their shareholders ; and that the Government does its planning work well and fully, so that compulsion is only used as a supplement when necessary for volunteering, and that the service forthcoming is well directed and not wasted.

But it is not enough to match strength with strength. We must penetrate the mind of the peoples who may oppose us, and weaken their will to aggression. We should constantly and clearly expound and proclaim the principles of freedom, personal liberty, self-government and humane policy on which our systems are formed. We should formulate the broad outline of world policy which we stand for in peace, which we should fight for in war, which we should seek to embody in a peace settlement if we win. We should make known these principles and ideals in every possible way, in published statements and by radio, to the whole world including the peoples of all countries who may be either friends or foes. With an appeal so broadly conceived and so widely known we should strengthen the forces on our side and penetrate the hidden weaknesses of those who may support our assailants.

By such a course of policy and action we could make the potential strength of the democracies actual, utilise their greater resources and, while repairing their deficiencies, retain their distinctive advantages of initiative, willing co-operation and the endurance which is only possible to an instructed people who understand the purpose of their effort and approve it.

## *Epilogue*

SHALL we never pluck the best from fate and find the Golden Mean? Must we ever choose freedom without order, or order without freedom? Must justice and mercy bring always weakness in their train, and strength bring tyranny?

Shall Peace be never made between equals, but imposed always by victor upon vanquished? Must every Peace Treaty sow the seeds of future war? Shall the strong never be magnanimous and the weak never secure justice? Must success always sap the will, and the humiliation of defeat incite only to revenge? Shall wars with changing victors be for ever the dire fate of men?

We, the free democracies of the world, have the virtues bred and nursed in the pursuits of peace. That is not enough. We need also the sterner virtues—fortitude, daemonic energy, the will to act — and to act together.

Thus, and thus only, shall we now preserve the freedom which our fathers' valour bequeathed to us as at once our heritage and our trust. And let our discipline be not penal and enforced, but self-imposed and welcome; our strength that of free men who know and approve their purpose, and in their strength show wisdom. It will little profit a State to preserve its body, if its soul be lost. Let our cause then be one for which we can work with ardour, and if need be, fight; for which we can live, and if need be die. Patriotism will answer its challenge; but "patriotism is not enough". A cause worthy of Britain must be more than Britain's cause.



## NOTE

AN ordinary bibliographical list would be impracticable, and unsuitable to the character of this book. As, however, the general plan has necessitated a slight and inadequate treatment of many of the subjects included in it, some readers may find it convenient to know where the author has himself expressed his opinions more fully.

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381
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# INDEX

- Air defence, 177, 245 ff., 364
- Air Ministry, 186, 223
- Air Raid Defence League, 239-41
- Air Raid Precautions, 183, 188, 190-91, 245 ff.
- American psychology, 26-8, 36 ff.
- Anarchy, international, 100
- Anderson, Sir John, 184, 214, 245
- Anti-aircraft guns, 183, 187, 188
- Anti-isolationism, 28-32
- Appeasement, 8, 311-12
- Armaments, restriction of, 362-4
- Article 19, 127, 130-31
  
- Baldwin, Lord, 179, 181, 186, 194 ff., 262, 287
- Blockade, naval, 50, 80-84, 128
- Briand, Monsieur, 125, 150, 152
- British policy, 4-8, 345 ff.
  
- Cecil, Lord, 125, 161
- Chamberlain, Neville, 6, 276, 282 ff.
- Chatfield, Lord, 184, 214
- China, 68, 147
- Churchill, Winston, 91, 159, 161, 262
- Civilian defence, 188 ff., 246 ff.
- Collective security, 75, 126-7, 163 ff.
- Colonies, 43-4, 316, 328-42, 352-5
- Comintern, 91
- Committee of Imperial Defence, 179, 182
- Communism, 90-91, 158
- Compulsory Service, 267 ff.
- Conference, World, 320, 351
- Conscription, 70-71, 265-6
- Co-ordination of Defence, Minister for, 178, 181, 207, 228
- Covenant, League of Nations, 106 ff., 162, 355-6
- Non-ratification of, 111-13
- Czechoslovakia, 39, 69, 147-8
  
- Dawes Loan, 145, 150
- Defensive Alliances, 76-8, 155-6, 324, 358
- Democracy, 76, 84, 137, 278, 308, 361-2, 369-70, 374-5, 379, 380 ff., 385
- Dickinson, Lowes, 101
- Dictatorship, 3, 7, 15, 279-81, 361-362, 370-71, 375-9
- Dictatorships, economics of, 48 ff.
  
- Economic adaptation, 231 ff.
- Economic control in war, 57, 60-64, 277
- Economic Defence Institute, 240
- Economic General Staff, 216, 219, 382
- Encirclement, 223-5
- Ersatz, 81
- Evacuation, 189, 248-50
  
- Federation, 106, 143-4
- Food (Defence Plans) Department, 183, 228, 232
- Food distribution, 231
- Food supplies (German), 83-4
- Food reserves, 183, 227-30
- Foreign Affairs Committee, 260, 327
- Foreign Exchange, 50, 52, 53, 60-61
- Foreign Exchange control, 51-3
- Foreign trade (German), 60 ff.
- Fourteen Points, 111, 119, 335, 353
- France, 69, 71, 114-17, 146, 149, 152
- Freedom of the Seas, 9-10, 117, 119
  
- General settlement, 315 ff.
- German characteristics, 309-14
- German food supplies, 83-4
- German foreign trade, 60 ff.
- Germany, entry of into League, 131, 151
- Greece, 78, 124
- Grey, Lord, 263, 293
  
- Halifax, Lord, 262-4
- Hoare, Sir Samuel, 147, 189, 204-207, 262
- Hore Belisha, L., 188, 198-9
  
- Imperialism, 44-5
- Industry, location of, 233-4, 241-4

- Industry, service of, 274 ff.  
 Inflation, 51, 53-5  
 Inskip, Sir Thomas, 207-9, 262  
 Interceptors, 187, 247  
 International anarchy, 100  
 Inter-State principle, 106, 135 ff., 154  
 Iron ore, 82  
 Irredentism, 87-9  
 Isolationism, 28-32, 34-5  
 Italy, 21, 69, 71, 73, 88-9, 147, 169-70  
 Japan, 21, 80, 87, 121, 147  
 Jugo-Slavia, 73, 122  
 Kellogg-Briand Pact, 146, 151-2  
 League of Nations, 4-5, 99 ff., 135 ff., 355-61  
     Covenant of, 106 ff., 162, 355-6  
     Constitution of, 135 ff.  
     Regionalism in, 121-4, 166-7  
 Lippmann, W., 34-5  
 Lloyd George, D., 119, 145, 160-161, 262, 322  
 Locarno, 120, 146, 164  
 Location of industry, 233-4, 241-4  
 Lodge, Senator, 112  
 Mandates, 121, 336-7  
*Mein Kampf*, 370-71  
 Ministry of Supply, 221-6  
 Money, rôle of, 49 ff.  
 National Government, 259-62, 381-3  
 National Register, 273  
 National Service, 258 ff., 264  
 National unity, 258 ff.  
 Neutrality, 34-5, 76, 86-7  
 Oil, 62, 82-3, 147  
 Peaceful change, 126, 129-31, 135  
 P.E.P., 240  
 Poincaré, Monsieur, 146, 149, 152, 288  
 Poland, 7, 69, 70-71, 79, 88, 91-3, 122  
 Prestige, 100 ff., 164  
 Psychology, 11-14, 15-28, 118, 209-214, 322, 325  
     American, 26-8, 36 ff.  
     German, 309-14  
 Raw materials, 62, 227, 229-30, 328-330, 354  
 Revision of treaties, 129-31, 357  
 Rhineland, occupation of, 147  
 Roosevelt, President, 46, 91, 324  
 Royal Institute of International Affairs, 240  
 Rumania, 62, 78, 122  
 Russia, 68-72, 79, 90-94, 127, 158  
 Schacht, Herr, 52-3  
 Sea-power, 12 ff., 34, 80  
 Sea supremacy, 9-11, 34-5  
 Self-government, 137-8  
 Self-sufficiency, 49-50  
 Shelters, basement, 245, 252  
     deep, 246, 250, 253 ff.  
     steel, 245, 248, 252  
 Simon, Sir John, 146, 189, 202-4, 262  
 Soviet Union, 68-70, 72, 90, 92  
 Spain, 74-5, 124, 147  
 Stalin, 90, 161  
 "Statisticians' fallacy", 66  
 Steel production, 68-9, 71-2  
 Stimson, H. L., 35-6, 146, 151  
 Streit, C., 140 ff.  
 Stresemann, Herr, 146, 150, 152  
 Supply, Ministry of, 221-6  
 Swinton, Lord, 200  
 Territorial Army, 185, 272  
 Trade policy, 328, 351-2  
 Treaties, revision of, 129-31, 357  
 Treaty of Versailles, 318, 321, 325-327, 346  
 Turkey, 78  
 Ukraine, 70, 90  
 Unanimity, 108-9  
*Union Now*, 140 ff.  
 U.S.A., 7-10, 26 ff., 69, 72, 79, 111-14, 127, 155, 176  
 Versailles Treaty, 318, 321, 325-7, 346  
 Voluntary Service, 70, 266-8  
 War, causes of, 100, 105-6  
 War control system (British), 57-9  
 War Guilt Clause, 321-3, 349-50  
 War profits, 275-8  
 Wilson, Woodrow, 111-12  
 Wood, Sir Kingsley, 200-202  
 World Conference, 146, 320, 351  
 World Government, 106-9

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